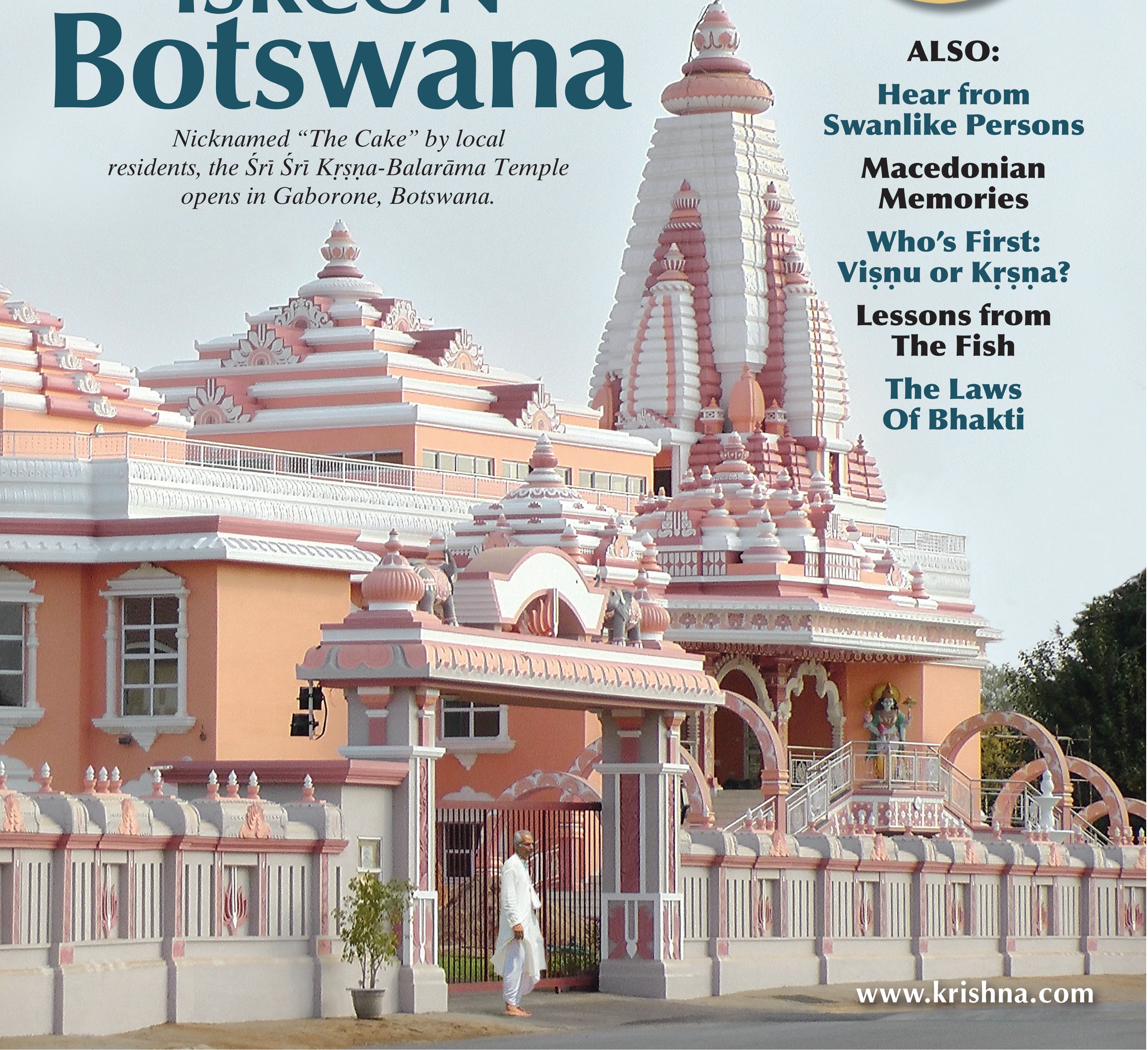
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • May/June 2013 • $4.50



ISKCON Botswana

Nicknamed "The Cake" by local residents, the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple opens in Gaborone, Botswana.

ALSO:

Hear from Swanlike Persons

Macedonian Memories

Who's First: Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa?

Lessons from The Fish

The Laws Of Bhakti

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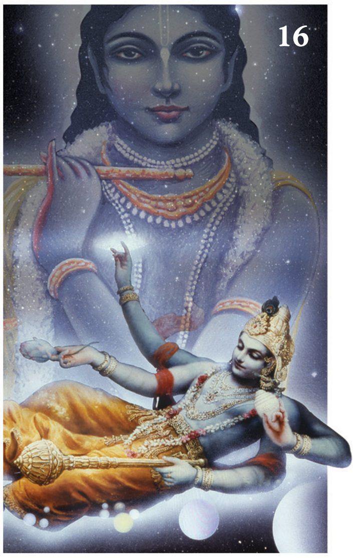

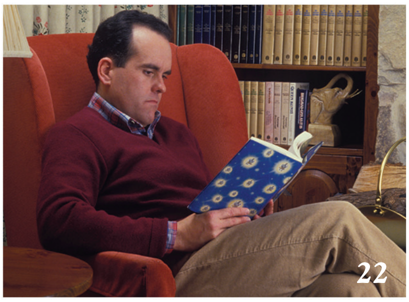

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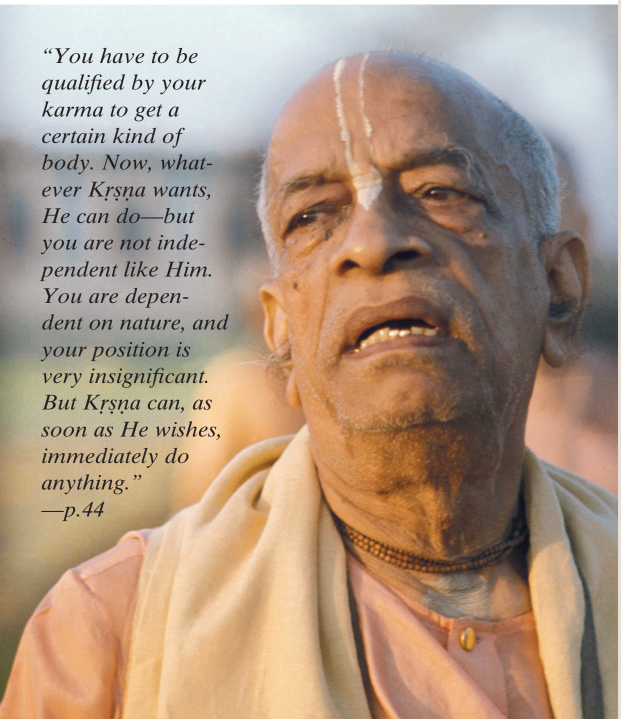
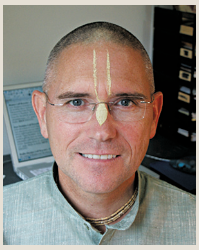
COVER Last September, a stunning new temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness opened in Gaborone, capital of Botswana, in southern Africa. Please see the article beginning on page 46. (Photo by Śacī Kumāra Dāsa.)



"You have to be qualified by your karma to get a certain kind of body. Now, whatever Kṛṣṇa wants, He can do—but you are not independent like Him. You are dependent on nature, and your position is very insignificant. But Kṛṣṇa can, as soon as He wishes, immediately do anything."
—p.44

WELCOME

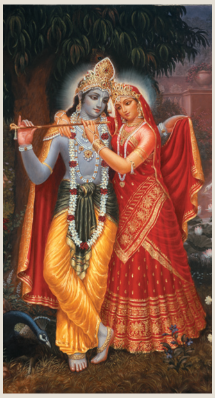


Members of local congregations of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are working together in cities around the world to help spread Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings. One of the most conspicuous endeavors by ISKCON's congregation is the building of temples, the creation of beautiful spiritual havens for Kṛṣṇa devotees old and new. In this issue we spotlight the new temple in a place many of us may never have heard of: Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, a country just north of South Africa.

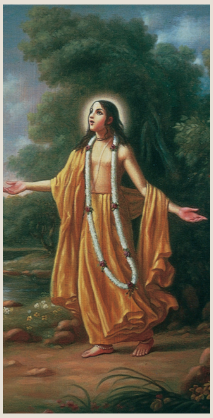
In this issue we also hear again from world-traveling preacher Indradyumna Swami. Over the years, we've read about his visits to Siberia, Java, and the Amazon rainforest, to name just a few places where he has taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This time he's in Macedonia, delivering a talk in the place of Alexander the Great and Mother Teresa.

The worldwide reach of Kṛṣṇa consciousness attests to its transnational appeal. And as Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī shows in "Touched by Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books," that appeal is trans-generational as well. That's because, as Mukundamālā Dāsa explains in "The Laws of Bhakti," Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a science whose validity we can all test for ourselves.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Why Would God Have Wives?

Upon reading the letter entitled "The Spiritual World" in the letters section of the March/April issue, I became rather confused by a statement in the response to the letter. You stated that Kṛṣṇa is engaged in loving exchanges with friends, wives, and children, and you also stated that Kṛṣṇa has "girlfriends" and is involved in loving exchanges of all varieties. Could you please explain further exactly what you mean by this? Why would the Lord need many wives and lovers, let alone even one, and just what type of relationship would Kṛṣṇa be engaged in with these women, and why? Is it spiritual or sensual?

Joe Zamora
Via the Internet

Our reply: Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth, from whom everything emanates, and thus the different kinds of relationships we have in human society come from Him. These relationships exist with Kṛṣṇa in perfection in the spiritual world, and Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are completely satisfied with them. Although Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all spiritual pleasure and, as you mention, does not need wives or lovers, still to satisfy the devotees who approach Him in those moods, He fulfills their desires and enjoys doing that in an exchange of affection that is fully spiritual.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, describes Kṛṣṇa's relationships in the Sixtieth Chapter of *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead:* "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, certainly has no business being anyone's husband or son or father, because everything belongs to Him and everyone is under His control. He does not require anyone's help for His satisfaction. He is *ātmārāma,* self-satisfied; He can derive all pleasure by Himself, without anyone's help. But when the Lord descends to play the part of a human being, He plays a role either as a husband, son, friend, or enemy in full perfection. As such, when He was playing as the perfect husband of the queens, especially of Rukmiṇījī, He enjoyed conjugal love in complete perfection."

Ching-Ching-Ching

In "Relationships Matter" (March/April) the author recounted that her young son once questioned "if Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda were real because it seemed like hardly anybody knows about them." He wanted her to "tell more people to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." In contrast, in the "How I Came to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness" article, the author (writing about his experiences in the 1970s) was "trying to avoid Kṛṣṇa devotees, but His devotees were everywhere." A recurring theme in these stories is that many times the subject follows the "ching-ching-ching" sound to a chanting party in the process of transforming the streets with unique devotional fervor. We can repeat the heyday of ISKCON's fired-up '70s by simply following the example Lord Caitanya and Prabhupāda set in order to lead people to the feet of the holy name: routinely perform public chanting and dancing.

Rūpacandra Dāsī
Bonners Ferry, Idaho

Charity and the Modes of Nature

In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Chapter 17, Kṛṣṇa explains about charity in the three material modes. Under which category does unmotivated charity given to orphans and the disabled come?

As I understand it, charity given to worthy persons (*brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas) is in the mode of goodness. Orphans and the disabled may not be worthy persons.

At the same time, if the charity is unmotivated, it may not be in passion. Does it come under a mixture of the modes of goodness and passion?

Bandhu Mādhava Dāsa
Via the Internet

Our reply: You mention that the gift is "unmotivated," but if it is not motivated, then why is it not being given somewhere else, where Kṛṣṇa is involved? The idea of helping people materially but not helping them also (and more importantly) spiritually is at least to some extent wrongly motivated. Although it might not be motivated by a desire to be famous as a charity giver, there is an underlying desire to feel good about helping someone in need. That is a personal motivation. So the charity is not really "unmotivated." Although the motivation might not be totally egocentric, it is still based on the bodily conception of life.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.8), Kṛṣṇa instructs us to fix our minds on Him. If we are unable to do that, He recommends following the principles of *bhakti-yoga* to develop a desire to attain Him (12.9). If we can't do that, then "just try to work for Me" (12.10). Then: "If, however, you are unable to work in this consciousness of Me, then try to act giving up all results of your work and try to be self-situated." (12.11) In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes the point that a person who is Kṛṣṇa conscious or trying to be Kṛṣṇa conscious may give in charity to some material cause due to social obligations and this charity is purifying and gradually elevating. In your question you do not mention whether or not the giver of charity is Kṛṣṇa conscious.

The point is that several factors influence the degree and quality of benefit for the giver. If someone gives charity to an orphanage and the money is used to buy meat to feed the residents, for example, that would affect the result of the charity.

That is why it is recommended to give charity to the proper persons (Vaiṣṇavas) and for the proper cause: to assist others in their journey back to Kṛṣṇa. Then and only then can one be assured that the result will be positive in every way.

Even charity in the mode of goodness has a reaction in that the giver will be bound to return to the material world to receive charity from the person to whom the charity was given. This creates a cycle. Only when one engages in karma-free activity—activity done for Kṛṣṇa's cause—is there no reaction. Otherwise, there are unforeseen reactions that may be far from "good karma."

These points suggest that the charity you describe would be goodness/passion at best. The more Kṛṣṇa is involved—in the activities and motivation of the giver, and in the qualifications of the receiver—the less affected by the modes of nature the charity becomes.

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors @krishna.com.

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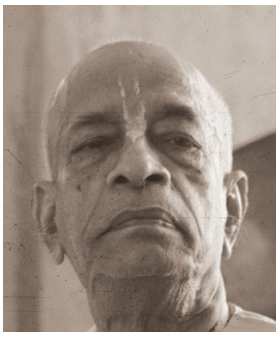


FOUNDER'S LECTURE

Mayapur, West Bengal, India—February 25, 1976

Hear from Swa

The great devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja shows the way to freedom from material existence.

By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

---

so 'haṁ priyasya suhṛdaḥ paradevatāyā / līlā-kathās tava nṛsiṁha viriñca-gītāḥ
añjas titarmy anugṛṇan guṇa-vipramukto / durgāṇi te pada-yugālaya-haṁsa-saṅgaḥ

"O my Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, by engaging in Your transcendental loving service in the association of devotees who are liberated souls [*haṁsas*], I shall become completely uncontaminated by the association of the three modes of material nature and be able to chant the glories of Your Lordship, who are so dear to me. I shall chant Your glories, following exactly in the footsteps of Lord Brahmā and his disciplic succession. In this way I shall undoubtedly be able to cross the ocean of nescience."—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.18

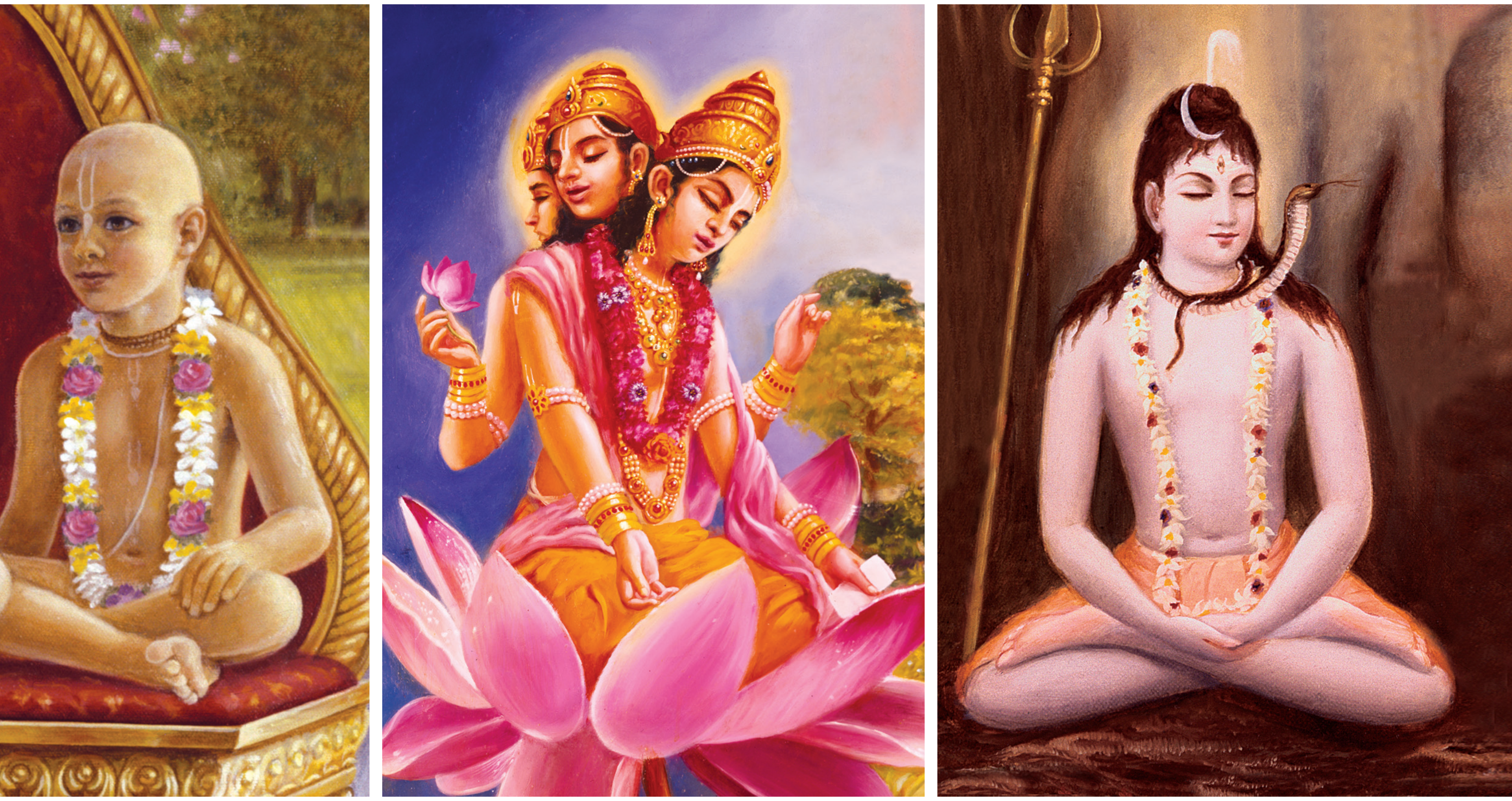
nlike Persons

VIRIÑCA MEANS Lord Brahmā and his followers. We are members of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya, which means we also belong to the Brahma-sampradāya. *Sampradāya* means spiritual lineage. Our *sampradāya* begins from Lord Brahmā. There are four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas:* Brahma-sampradāya, Rudra-sampradāya, Kumāra-sampradāya, and Lakṣmī-sampradāya. If we do not accept one of these *sampradāyas* in disciplic succession, then our attempt to advance in spiritual life will fail. The *Padma Purāṇa* says, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣhalā matāḥ:* "If your mantra is not received from a bona fide *sampradāya,* it will not bear fruit." You cannot manufacture your own prayers; you must follow the footprints of the *mahājanas,* or great souls. The leaders of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* are all *mahājanas:* Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, the Kumāras, and Lakṣmīdevī.

Lakṣmīdevī is the spiritual potency of Lord Viṣṇu, or Lord Nārāyaṇa. She's always engaged in massaging the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa. She is known as Śrī, which means opulence, fortune, beauty. She is the reservoir of all these things. Her *sampradāya* is called the Śrī-sampradāya. It is also called the Rāmānuja-sampradāya because the main guru in her line was Rāmānuja. Members of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya worship Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Each of the four Vaiṣṇava

Below, left to right: The founders of the four Vaiṣṇava lines of spiritual masters —Lakṣmī Devī, the four Kumāras, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Śiva.

Details from paintings (left to right): Dhṛti-Devī Dāsī, Rāmaprasāda Dāsa, Bharadvāja Dāsa, Muralīdhara Dāsa



sampradāyas worships the Lord along with His spiritual potency. Just as we worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Rāmānuja-sampradāya worships Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa or Sītā-Rāma. Everyone should follow a Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya.*

Prahlāda Mahārāja is also a *mahājana,* because he follows other *mahājanas.* Here he says to Lord Nṛsiṁha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation, "I shall relish hearing the narration of Your pastimes." The narration he speaks of is not written by some mundane drama writer or novel writer. No, not that. That is useless. You should not touch such narrations. If some ordinary person has written something about Kṛṣṇa's *līlā,* Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, you should not touch it. Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* must be narrated by an authorized person in the *sampradāya.* Otherwise it is useless. You should not touch it. Therefore Prahlāda especially mentions, *līlā-kathās tava nṛsiṁha viriñca-gītāḥ:* "narrations of Your pastimes given by *mahājanas* like Brahmā."

Saintly persons will accept the Vedic literature, which is sung by Brahmā or Śiva or another devotee, even if it is written in broken language.

We offer prayers Lord Brahmā composed called the *Brahma-saṁhitā.* We cannot offer prayers written by some nonsense person. No. *Viriñca-gītāḥ:* "spoken by Brahmā." There is power in such prayers. If you recite prayers composed by *mahājanas,* that recitation has spiritual power.

Mr. Max Mueller is very famous as a translator of the *Vedas.* Many scholars have read his translations, but none of them could understand the purpose of the *Vedas* because he's not in the line of a *sampradāya. Nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23). This is the injunction given in the *Vedas. Ayam ātmā* refers to God realization or self-realization. In slightly different wording it is said, *nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ:* "One who has no spiritual strength cannot understand God." *Na medhayā:* If you have a very good fertile brain for manufacturing concocted ideas, that doesn't mean you'll be able to understand Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. Only one who is favored by Kṛṣṇa and His confidential devotee can understand.

Crows and Swans

Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja is giving a warning when he says, "I shall recite the narration of Your pastimes that is composed by Brahmā." That is the secret of success. You cannot compose whimsically. Therefore the next words are very important. *Pada-yugālaya-haṁsa-saṅgaḥ:* "fully absorbed in meditating on Your lotus feet in the association of liberated souls." Kṛṣṇa's feet are compared to a lotus. "Lotus feet," we say. Where there are lotuses, there are *haṁsas,* swans. Here the word *swan* means liberated souls. There is a difference between crows and swans. Crows gather in a filthy place, where rotten things are kept. The crow will not go where there are lotuses; the *haṁsa,* swan, will go there. Even in the bird society there are classes: crow society, swan society, pigeon society, sparrow society. Everyone belongs to a society. But one society is different from another society. Similarly, where there is *kṛṣṇa-kathā,* discussion of topics about Kṛṣṇa, the crowlike men will not come. Where there is cinema, where there is prostitute dance, where there is drinking, the crowlike men will gather.

na yad vacaś citra-padaṁ harer
yaśo
jagat-pavitraṁ pragṛṇīta karhicit
tad vāyasaṁ tīrtham uśanti
mānasā
na yatra haṁsā niramanty
uśik-kṣayāḥ

"Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.10)

The class of men who are like crows prefer any artistically written literature that does not glorify the Lord. But saintly persons will accept the Vedic literature, which is sung by Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva or another devotee, even if it is written in broken language. That is the secret of success. If your writing exactly follows the *mahājanas,* then it will be liked by highly advanced saintly persons. Otherwise, it is rejected as suitable only for crows.

Therefore one must be warned, as Prahlāda Mahārāja is warning us. We should not indulge in reading speculation or literature that is never touched by the *mahājanas.*

Why are we giving so much stress on *Bhagavad-gītā*? Because it is spoken by Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, anything written by Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee is important. Otherwise it's not important.

We should be engaged in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa always. Reading books is very good engagement, but the books must be written by authorities on Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, reading newspapers or ordinary books twenty-four hours a day is simply a waste of time. But if we read authorized literature, then what will happen? *Ajas titarmy anugṛṇan guṇa-vipramukto:* We shall be free from material entanglement.

Bhagavad-gītā and Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa are identical. There is no difference. If you read with the intention that "I shall be able to associate with devotees and Kṛṣṇa," then *Bhagavad-gītā* is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. There is no difference. If you are a bona fide devotee, when you read *Bhagavad-gītā* you must know that Kṛṣṇa is there. If you are a pure devotee, when you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is there on your tongue, dancing. Don't think otherwise. Kṛṣṇa is there. If you are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa without offense—there are ten kinds of offense—then you must know that Kṛṣṇa is there.

The same applies to reading *līlā-kathā,* the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. We are today reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the *līlā-kathā* of Kṛṣṇa and His devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja. *Līlā* is the dealings between the devotee and the Lord. The whole subject of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Bhagavān and *bhakta.* Bhagavān is the Lord, and *bhakta* is the devotee. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you won't find any newspaper items—"There was an earthquake in London," and this and that. You don't find all these things. It is not *vāyasa-tīrtham,* not for the enjoyment of the crow-like men. It is for swanlike persons, *haṁsas.*

Extracting Spirit From Matter

Why is the word *haṁsa* used for a liberated person? *Haṁsa* means swan. If you give the *haṁsa* milk mixed with water, the *haṁsa* has the capacity to drink the milk and reject the water. And *paramahaṁsa* means a person who, although in the material world, has kicked out material things and taken Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, even in the material world. The *haṁsa* can take Kṛṣṇa, not the crows.

Those who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are being trained to become *haṁsas,* or they are *haṁsas.* They don't care for any material thing. They are concerned with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, but only the devotees can take Kṛṣṇa from anywhere. How? What is the process? The process is devotional service. If you are engaged in devotional service anywhere, you are with Kṛṣṇa.

īhā yasya harer dāsye
  karmaṇā manasā vācā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu
  jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyate

"A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (or, in other words, in the service of Kṛṣṇa) with his body, mind, intelligence, and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.187)

One who has the sincere desire to serve Kṛṣṇa in any position, in any body, in any circumstance, is a *jīvan-mukta,* or liberated soul. That is the position of the *paramahaṁsa. Jīvan-mukta* means that although he's living in the body, he's a *paramahaṁsa.* He has nothing to do with the body. He has everything to do with Kṛṣṇa.

We have to take shelter of such a person. Therefore it is said here, *pada-yugālaya-haṁsa-saṅgaḥ:* Associate with a devotee who is always living under the protection, the shelter, of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, like the *haṁsa.* When there is a lotus the swans go down within the water and entangle themselves with the stems of the lotus. Our mind should be trained like the *haṁsa,* taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet just as the swan entangles itself with the stem of a lotus flower.

If we associate with and become the servant of a *haṁsa* who has nothing to do with this material world, who has taken the cream of the material world—Kṛṣṇa—then our life will be successful. *Añjas titarmi.* Very easily we shall cross over the ocean of nescience.

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

Like Water in a Calf's Hoof-Print

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.58) says,

samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ
mahat-padaṁ puṇya-yaśo
murāreḥ
bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ paraṁ
padaṁ
padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadāṁ na
teṣām

"For those who have accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the Mura demon, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf's hoof-print. Their goal is *paraṁ padam,* Vaikuṇṭha, the place where there are no material miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step."

Bhavāmbudhiḥ means the great ocean of nescience into which we have fallen and in which we are now very much struggling for existence. If you are thrown into the ocean, you may be a very good swimmer, but the condition is very dangerous. You'll have to struggle. You cannot say, "I am a good swimmer. I shall very easily be able to cross the ocean." No. That's not possible. But you can cross the ocean of material existence if you take the shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord.

Kṛṣṇa's feet are the shelter of the whole material creation. The total material energy is called *mahat-tattva.* From *mahat-tattva* the whole cosmic manifestation has come, and the *mahat-tattva* comes from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Therefore, by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet one can cross over material existence. *Bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ.* The great ocean of nescience becomes a small spot of water, like that in the hoof-print of a calf.

In the previous verse, Prahlāda Mahārāja describes the material world as simply a place of lamentation. Sometimes we are so-called happy by getting desirable things, but mostly we are unhappy, associating with undesirable things. So in order to save oneself from these opposing elements, the best thing is suggested in today's verse: to hear topics of Kṛṣṇa from pure devotees.

Let us be engaged always in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa or reading the pastimes of the Lord, *līlā-kathā. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is full of *līlā-kathā,* the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are the only way to get out of the miserable condition of this material world. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said,

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

"One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." (*Śikṣāṣṭaka,* Verse 3)

When you read or hear or chant about the pastimes of the Lord, that is *kīrtana.* And if you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra with instruments, that is also *kīrtana.* There is no difference. We must always engage in *kīrtana: kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.* We should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra or read our books. Then we'll be safe from *māyā.* Otherwise, at any time, we'll be victimized.

Thank you very much.

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna. (Cited as Bg.)

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasāda—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śāstra—scriptures, especially the Vedic scriptures of India.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. (Cited as *Bhāg.*)

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

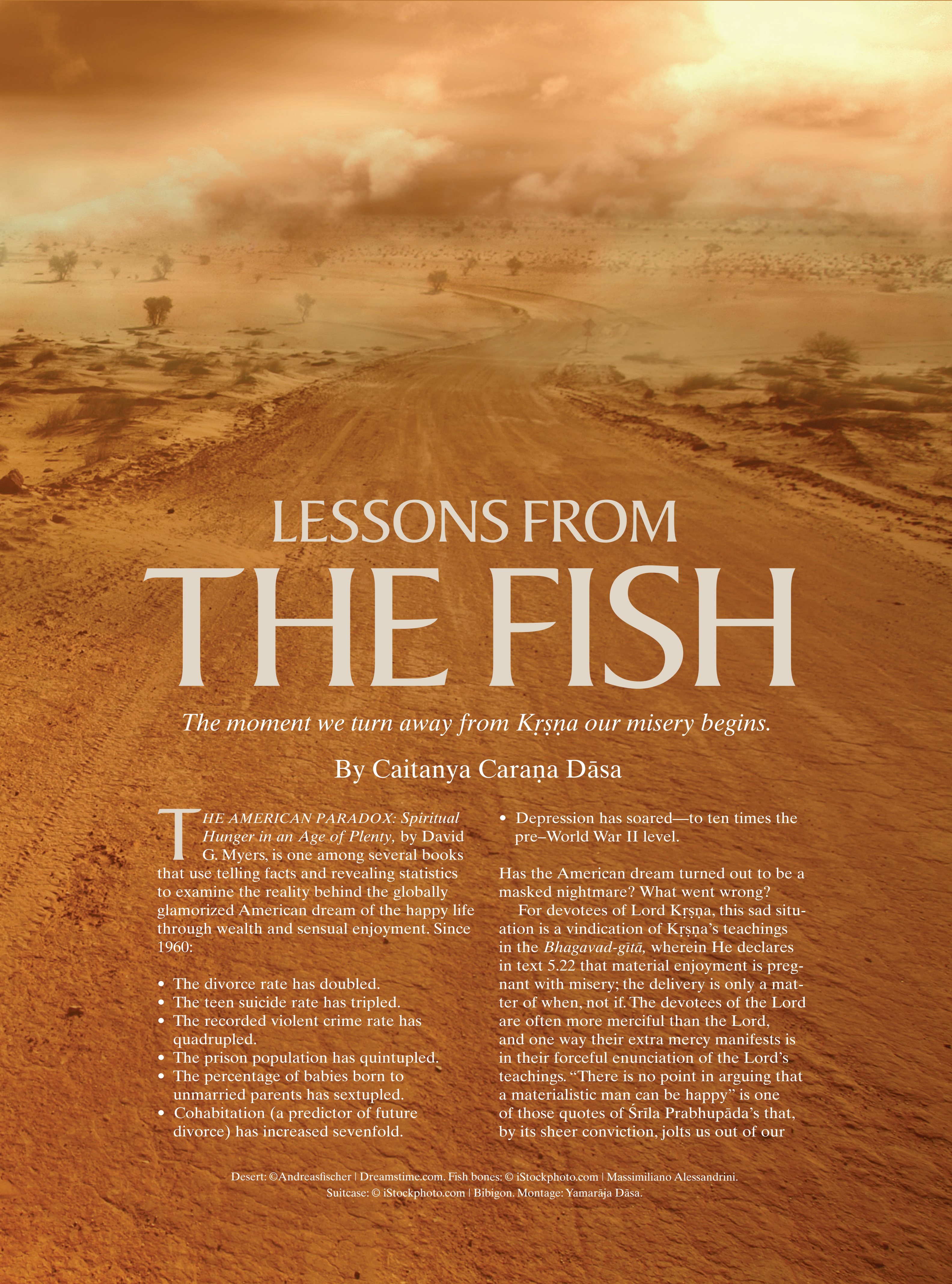
Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

HONG KONG
EGYPT
LONDON
HOTEL
I Love Italy



LESSONS FROM THE FISH

The moment we turn away from Kṛṣṇa our misery begins.

By Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

THE AMERICAN PARADOX: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty, by David G. Myers, is one among several books that use telling facts and revealing statistics to examine the reality behind the globally glamorized American dream of the happy life through wealth and sensual enjoyment. Since 1960:

- The divorce rate has doubled.
- The teen suicide rate has tripled.
- The recorded violent crime rate has quadrupled.
- The prison population has quintupled.
- The percentage of babies born to unmarried parents has sextupled.
- Cohabitation (a predictor of future divorce) has increased sevenfold.
- Depression has soared—to ten times the pre–World War II level.

Has the American dream turned out to be a masked nightmare? What went wrong?

For devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this sad situation is a vindication of Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* wherein He declares in text 5.22 that material enjoyment is pregnant with misery; the delivery is only a matter of when, not if. The devotees of the Lord are often more merciful than the Lord, and one way their extra mercy manifests is in their forceful enunciation of the Lord's teachings. "There is no point in arguing that a materialistic man can be happy" is one of those quotes of Śrīla Prabhupāda's that, by its sheer conviction, jolts us out of our

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complacency in material life. Most of the media and culture around us vigorously champions materialism as the way to become happy, but Śrīla Prabhupāda asserts with absolute conviction that materialism can never make anyone happy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is simply rephrasing an essential and repeated teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa's. To help us grasp this scriptural teaching, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the analogy of a fish: Just as a fish starts suffering the moment it leaves the ocean, we start suffering the moment we leave the nectar-ocean of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Let us reflect on this analogy a bit.

The Fate of the Fish

Imagine a fish in an ocean bordering a vast desert. It sees a mirage onshore and decides one day that life on land will be more enjoyable. From the moment it comes out of the ocean, its suffering begins. The mirage provides no water, and any drops of water it finds are too small to give any satisfaction. The only way the fish can experience happiness is by returning to the ocean. The more it pursues either the mirage or the drops of water, the more it suffers from the scorching heat of the sand underneath and the sun overhead. Had the fish known it would be miserable the moment it left the ocean, it would not have ventured onshore and would have ignored the mirage. Even if it didn't feel completely happy in the water, the way to greater happiness was never to be found on land.

We are allured out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by sense objects—pleasures and treasures, positions and possessions.

All of us are like the fish, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like the ocean. From the moment we let our consciousness come out of the nectar-ocean of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we begin experiencing misery. We are allured out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by sense objects—pleasures and treasures, positions and possessions. No matter how appealing sense objects seem to be, they are simply a sham and can never make us happy. They are temporarily pleasure-giving, whereas we are eternally pleasure-seeking. We can experience happiness only by returning to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The more we pursue sense objects, the longer we suffer as we journey to and fro between Kṛṣṇa consciousness and sense objects—through the scorching heat of material conditions and materialistic conditioning. The journey is painful and difficult because every action we perform conditions us, creating patterns of thinking and behaving that incite us to repeat that action. The human vulnerability to conditioning traps us in addiction—often unwittingly and sometimes even unwillingly.

That's why, when we do realize the futility of material enjoyment, it has often become the default setting of our mind; we instinctively, unthinkingly gravitate toward it, and going against that gravitational force becomes difficult and often painful. Moreover, in the pursuit of material enjoyment, we mix and bond with materialistically oriented people, and the emotional bonds we thus form often make it tough for us to turn away from worldly pleasures that have won us others' approval.

Therefore, when we know we are going to increase our misery by coming out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, why should we ever come out? Indeed, why should we even glance at sense objects that might beguile us to come out? Even if we don't feel fully happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the only way to greater happiness is not outward, but inward—not out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but deeper into Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Noteworthy Nuances

Of course, the fish analogy is not perfect. No material analogy can ever perfectly convey a spiritual truth. But in our present state of consciousness, with our minds still conditioned by the limits imposed by the material energy, analogies can help. So spiritual teachers use material analogies to convey spiritual truths—even if imperfectly. To avoid any misconceptions the fish analogy might have provoked, let us consider its limitations. They reveal important nuances of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

1. When the fish comes out of the water, within a short time it dies. We, being eternal souls, never die, but by forsaking Kṛṣṇa consciousness we "kill" our spiritual awareness—the awareness that we are spiritual beings entitled to spiritual happiness in the spiritual world by reciprocating spiritual love with the supreme spiritual reality, Kṛṣṇa. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Īśopaniṣad* refer to those who kill their spiritual awareness as *ātmahā,* "killers of the soul"—an apt metaphor.

2. A fish is never allured by a mirage, but we are attracted by miragelike sense objects. This attraction is due to the power of *māyā*, the deluding energy, which perverts our perception by its two potencies: (a) The *āvaraṇātmikā-śakti* (covering potency) obscures our perception of our true nature as spiritual beings and freezes our spiritual desires. (b) The *prakṣemātikā-śakti* (pulling-down potency) deludes us with the false self-conception that we are materialistic creatures and kindles our material desires.

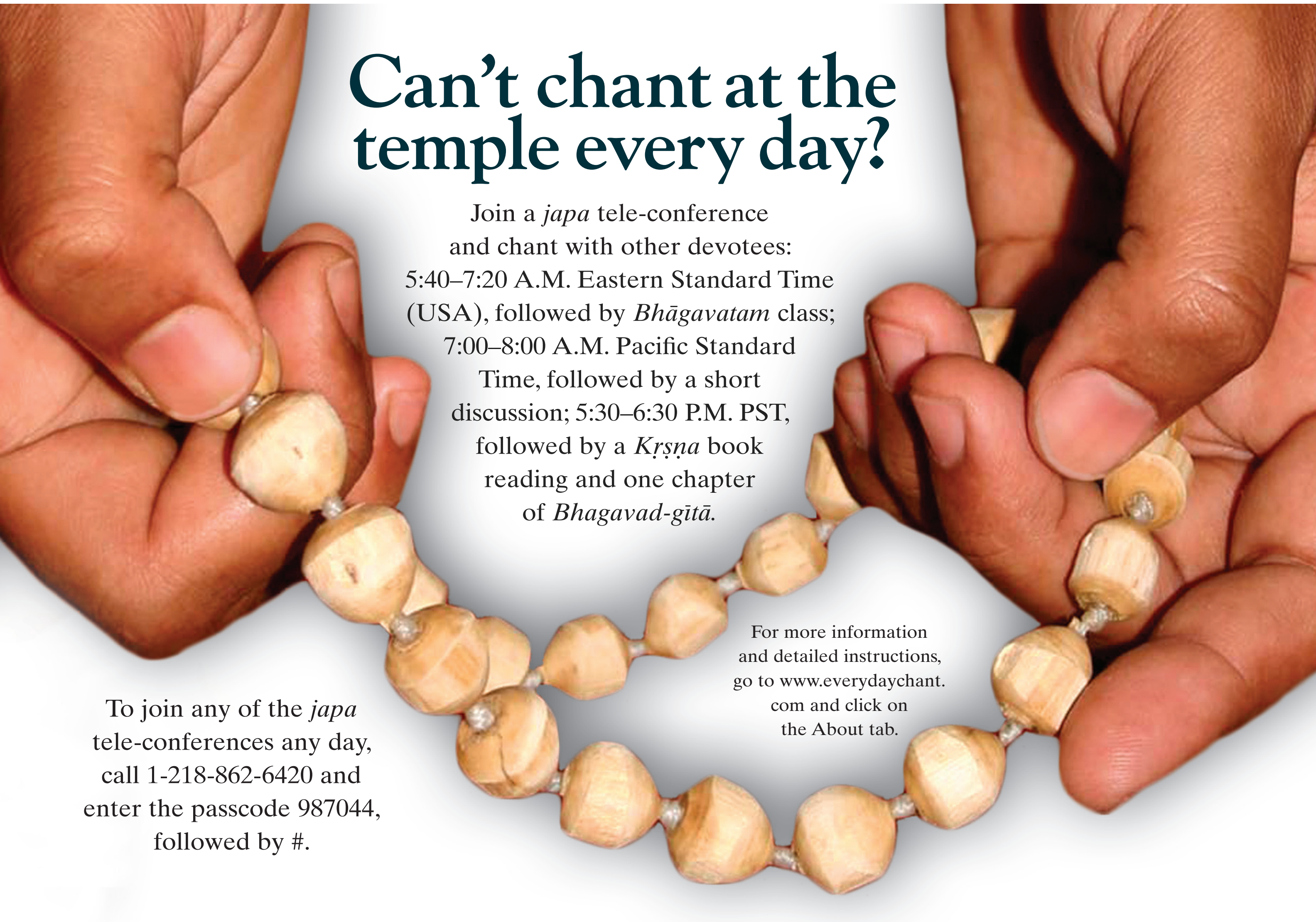
3. The suffering of a fish out of water is always easy to see, unlike the suffering of people devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Factually, no one can be happy without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the statistics quoted at the start poignantly dem-

onstrate this eternal truth. But those living beings who have been living without Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a long, long time have almost entirely forgotten the taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As they presently don't know any pleasure other than the pseudo pleasure of sense gratification, they have become habituated to this pseudo pleasure despite all the miseries that precede and succeed it. Habituated thus, they don't always know their own misery, as confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.30.5): "The conditioned living entity is satisfied in his own particular species of life; while deluded by the covering influence of the illusory energy, he feels little inclined to cast off his body, even when in hell, for he takes delight in hellish enjoyment."

The illusion that materialistic people are happy may beguile even spiritually-minded people to pursue materialistic goals and to alternate between material enjoyment and spiritual purification. But the illusory tastes of sense gratification can no longer satisfy those of us who know something better, who have tasted Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The sublime and supreme taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is still fresh in our memory—if not in our conscious memory, then at least in our subconscious memory. That's why even if we consciously turn away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness to pursue sense gratification, we subconsciously keep comparing the taste of sense gratification with the taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and naturally find the former unsatisfying. The *Bhāgavatam* (1.5.19) proclaims, "Even though a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa sometimes falls down somehow or other, he certainly does not undergo material existence like others because a person who has once relished the taste of the lotus feet of the Lord can do nothing but remember that ecstasy again and again."

Unfortunately, despite repeatedly experiencing sense gratification to be insipid and inane, our stubborn mind may still impel and compel us to keep pursuing it. In such situations, we can use the graphic fish analogy and the resonant Prabhupāda quote as hammers to drive the naillike truth of the futility of sense gratification through the wall-like stubbornness of our mind. Sooner or later we will realize that the pursuit of sense gratification is a lost cause and will turn—or return—to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And better sooner than later.

Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronic and telecommunications engineering and serves full time at ISKCON Pune. He is the author of eight books. To read his other articles or to receive his daily reflection on the Bhagavad-gītā*, "Gita-daily," visit thespiritualscientist.com.*



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Who’s First: VIṢṆU OR KṚṢṆ

A discussion of the relative positions of the four-armed creator and the playful, flute-playing cowherd of Vrindavan.

By Satyarāja Dāsa

WHEN I SPEAK to college students or professors, a particular question often arises: Who is prior, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa? Most of my educated friends know that Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa are names for two distinct manifestations of the same Personality of Godhead. They further know that Viṣṇu is generally seen as God while Kṛṣṇa is considered His incarnation. Most dictionaries refer to Them in that way, with Viṣṇu taking the prior position. Consequently, the tradition that considers Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu supreme is usually referred to as Vaiṣṇavism, as opposed to the less common Kṛṣṇaism.

The very question of “who came first” is problematic, given that God is beyond time. For this reason, the chicken-or-egg logic simply does not apply. Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa exist eternally, though it might be said that one is the source of the other, much like the sun and its rays: The sun globe is “prior” in the sense that its rays emanate from it, and not the other way around. But they both exist simultaneously: As soon as there is a sun, there are sunrays. The question, then, becomes this: In the case of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, who is the sun and who the rays?*

Historically, it makes sense to assume that Viṣṇu is prior. After all, the scriptures inform us that He is the source of the creation, while Kṛṣṇa descended to earth some five thousand years ago. In addition, Viṣṇu lives in regal opulence in Vaikuṇṭha, evoking awe and reverence—as one would expect of God—whereas Kṛṣṇa appears as a simple cowherd boy in Vrindavan, ensconced in sweetness and simplicity.

Even though Viṣṇu came first in terms of the cosmic creation, visibility in the manifested world doesn’t necessarily correspond to ontological truth (*tattva*). Let me offer a practical example: If you meet me before you meet my mother, does that mean I am prior to her? In fact, one’s mother is always prior; one would not be here if not for her.

Another example: If you ask a child where water comes from, he might answer by referring to the tap, and he’ll prove it by turning on the tap water. As he grows older he acknowledges that water comes from the clouds as rain, and he’ll learn that there is a reservoir, a municipal water board, and a labyrinth of pipes that bring water to people’s homes. He understands the complicated process with study and

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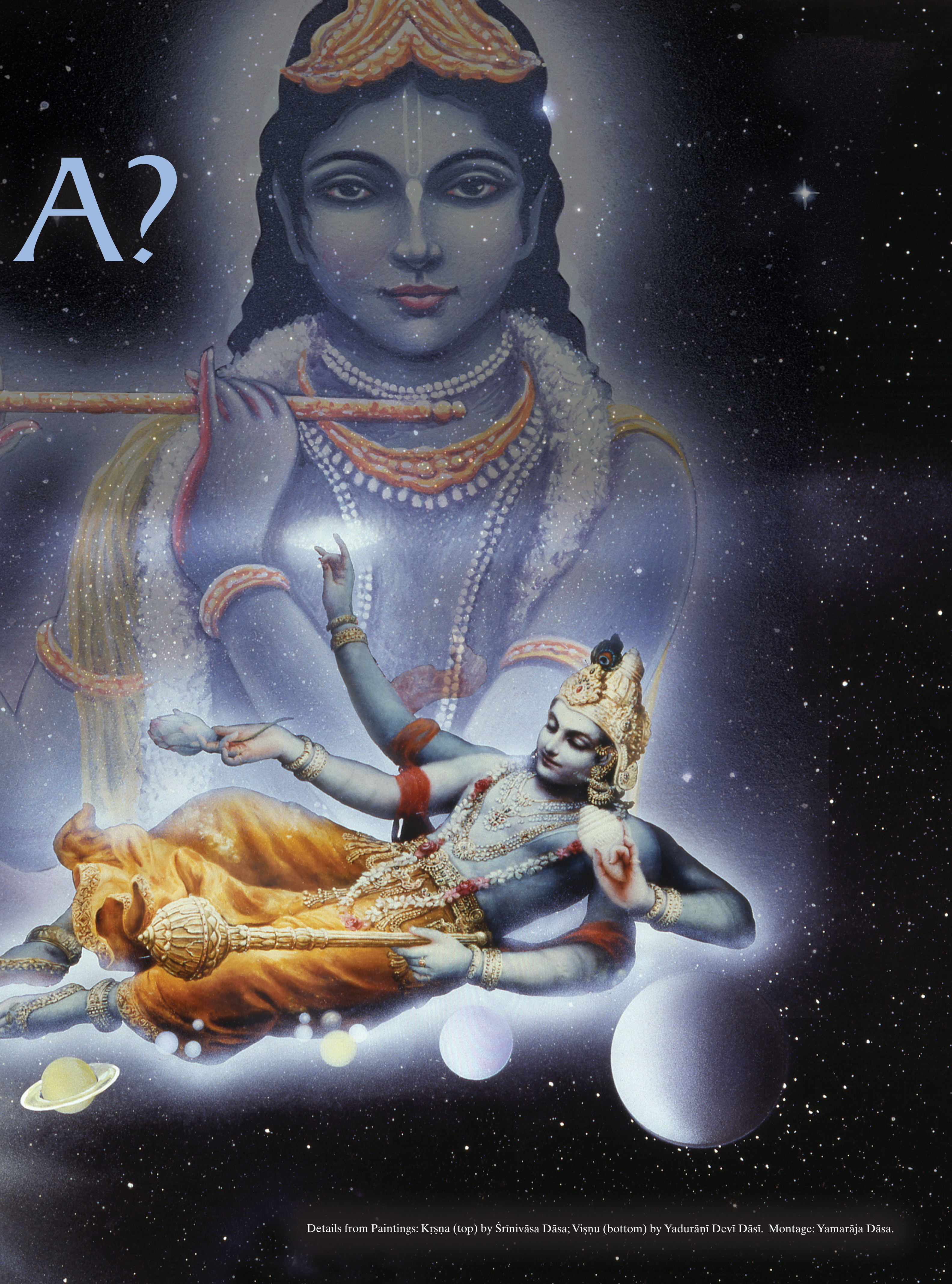
*Although traditionally the analogy of the sun and its rays is used in regard to the Supreme (Bhagavān) and the living entities (*jīva*), it can apply here as well, in the sense that we are trying to discern the source of God’s various manifestations.

A?



Details from Paintings: Kṛṣṇa (top) by Śrīnivāsa Dāsa; Viṣṇu (bottom) by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī. Montage: Yamarāja Dāsa.

growing awareness.

Similarly, scripture bears out that Kṛṣṇa is the source of Viṣṇu, even if Viṣṇu appears in this world before Kṛṣṇa does.

Polymorphic Monotheism

The confusion partly arises because, unlike most religious traditions, Vaiṣṇavism acknowledges a form of polymorphic monotheism. That is to say, it holds that there is one God who appears in numerous manifestations, each distinct and unique. These manifestations, moreover, are considered equal and yet hierarchical as well. They are one, and yet different.

Indeed, it may be said that all forms of God are one, as in the following quote from Śrīla Prabhupāda:

> In the category of Viṣṇu-tattva there is no loss of power from one expansion to the next, any more than there is a loss of illumination as one candle kindles another. Thousands may be kindled by an original candle, and all will have the same candle power. In this way it is to be understood that although all the Viṣṇu-tattvas, from Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya to Rāma, Narasiṁha, Varāha, and so on, appear with different features in different ages, all are equally invested with supreme potency. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 3.71, Purport)

Prabhupāda's candle analogy draws on a traditional example found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.46), objectively establishing Kṛṣṇa as supreme among manifestations of the Lord: "The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations."

Brahma states this even more directly earlier in that same work (5.1): "Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes."

And then again (5.39): "I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who by His various plenary portions appeared in the world in different forms and incarnations, such as Lord Rāma, but who personally appears in His supreme original form as Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Brahmā reiterates this point in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.14) after seeing Kṛṣṇa produce innumerable Viṣṇu forms from His transcendental body. Addressing Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā says, "Are You not the original Nārāyaṇa [Viṣṇu], O supreme controller, since You are the Soul of every embodied being and the eternal witness of all created realms? Indeed, Lord Nārāyaṇa is Your expansion, and He is called Nārāyaṇa because He is the generating source of the primeval water of the universe. He is real, not a product of Your illusory Māyā."

So, while full manifestations of God are all equal, there is a sense in which one comes from the other, with Kṛṣṇa existing at the very beginning. In this capacity He is known as *avatārī*—the source of all incarnations—as opposed to *avatāra*. Kṛṣṇa and His full incarnations are the same Supreme Person in different guises for distinct purposes, ranging from accepting the regal worship of His servitors in the spiritual world to intimate exchanges with His confidential devotees in Vrindavan.

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God at Home

Kṛṣṇa's various forms perfectly accommodate His interactions with His devotees. This can be understood by way of analogy: President Obama, as chief executive at the White House, has a formal role with weighty national duties. But at home he is father to his children, and his wife might even scold him for being late for dinner. Similarly, Viṣṇu is God in a more formal capacity, while Kṛṣṇa is "at home" as a loving cowherd boy who revels in intimacy with His various associates. An ordinary living entity, like the President, enacts his various roles using only one body, but God exists simultaneously in innumerable forms for each purpose and action.

According to tradition, the oneness of God's many forms exists in the realm of *tattva,* or philosophical truth. But there is a higher principle in Vaiṣṇavism, known as *rasa,* or the ecstatic interactions of the spiritual realm. And in this latter category of knowledge, distinction reigns supreme.

Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta Govinda* proclaims Kṛṣṇa's primary position among incarnations, reinforcing the teaching of the *Bhāgavatam.*

It is true that several Vaiṣṇava lines, such as the Śrī Sampradāya, see Viṣṇu, also known as Nārāyaṇa, as the highest manifestation of God. That is their prerogative, and devotees of Kṛṣṇa, understanding the common identity of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, respect the devotion of Viṣṇu's devotees. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu met with members of this lineage, for example, He was pleased to see how devoted they were to Viṣṇu. Similarly, in Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.4.99–107) we learn that the residents of Vaikuṇṭha, the majestic kingdom of God, prefer Viṣṇu to Kṛṣṇa. Sanātana Gosvāmī reveals this to be their particular *bhāva,* or emotion, and it is pleasing to God that His devotees in Vaikuṇṭha see Him in that way.

But those who come in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who revealed an esoteric side of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, see Kṛṣṇa as supreme, knowing Him to be the original Personality of Godhead. While this was certainly the *bhāva* taught by Mahāprabhu, it can also be demonstrated objectively with texts such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Brahma-saṁhitā,* as mentioned earlier.

It is the *Bhāgavatam,* in fact, that makes the most famous declarative statement about Kṛṣṇa's primary position:

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

"All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead." (*Bhāg.* 1.3.28) Actually, the First Canto's entire Third Chapter serves to prove our point: Its first four verses glorify the Viṣṇus who appear in the beginning of creation, and then it lists a number of important incarnations, including Kṛṣṇa Himself. It is only at the end of the list that we find the words *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*—"Kṛṣṇa is God Himself"—words that ring loudest for the *Bhāgavatam's* traditional commentators.

Prabhupāda's commentary on that text is clear: "In this particular stanza Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is distinguished from other incarnations." And later in that purport: "According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's statement, in accordance with authoritative sources, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the source of all other incarnations. It is not that Lord Kṛṣṇa has any source of incarnation."

According to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the patriarchs of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, this verse (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*) is the *paribhāsa-sūtra* of the entire 18,000-verse *Bhāgavatam.* A *paribhāsa-sūtra* states the central theme of a literary work. In his *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 73), Śrī Jīva elaborates, writing that the many verses of the *Bhāgavatam* might be compared to an army, with this verse the monarch who commands that army. He further shows that, according to this verse and many others, Kṛṣṇa is the original form of God and the ideal object of pure devotional service.

Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta Govinda* (circa twelth century) also proclaims Lord Kṛṣṇa's primary position among incarnations, reinforcing the teaching of the *Bhāgavatam.* After listing ten prominent incarnations of Viṣṇu in the book's first chapter, Jayadeva concludes by stating that Kṛṣṇa is their source. In fact, Jayadeva implies Kṛṣṇa's preeminence throughout the *Gīta Govinda* and states it explicitly in Act 1, Verse 16 (*daśākṛti-kṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ*): "O Kṛṣṇa, I offer my obeisances unto You, who assume these ten spiritual forms."

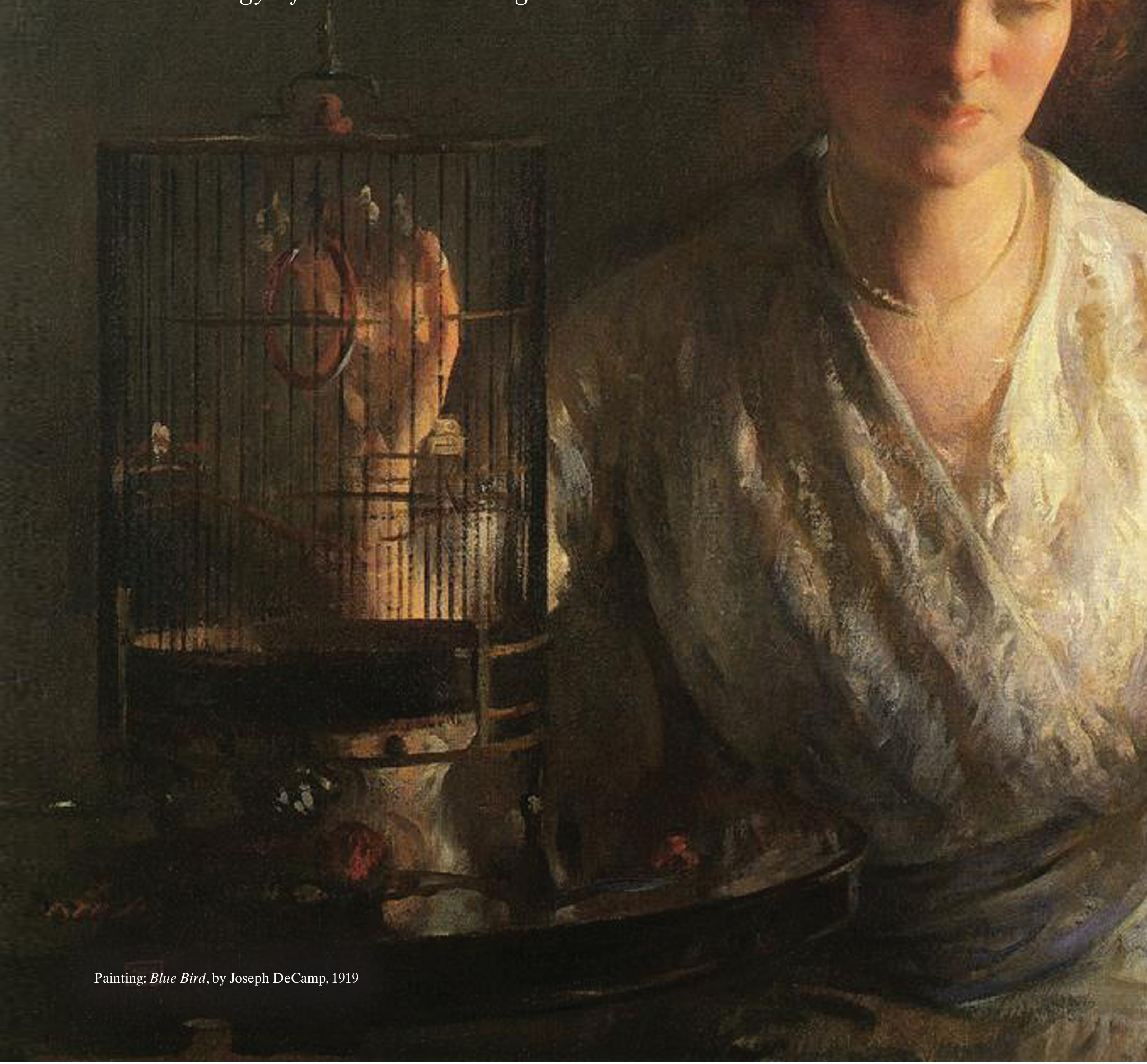
Kṛṣṇa's Unique Qualities

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* Rūpa Gosvāmī lists sixty-four characteristics or qualities exhibited by living beings. Fifty of these, he writes, can be found in an ordinary soul (*jīva*) in minute proportion, while Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and other demigods may possess as many as fifty-five. Viṣṇu, he continues, displays up to sixty of these qualities. But the remaining four are found only in Kṛṣṇa, escaping all other manifestations of the

(*please turn to page 58*)

Caring For the Bird

Adapted by Tattvavit Dāsa from Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings based on the analogy of the bird in the cage.



Painting: *Blue Bird*, by Joseph DeCamp, 1919

AFTER THE destruction of the body, the soul is not destroyed. The *Gītā* says that the soul is always new and fresh, imperishable, eternal. People foolishly neglect this actual self and misidentify with their body and mind, which are like a cage. Concentrating their energies on the upkeep of the cage, people neglect the captive soul within. The bird is not meant for the welfare of the cage, of course. But most human activities are done just for maintenance of the body and mind. People scarcely try to give any food to the bird, or the soul, who is distinct from the cage. Therefore everyone is committing suicide.

The message of the guru is to stop such misdirected activities. Some people do not believe in the scriptures, but if people have faith in divine wisdom and authority, they must prepare for their freedom in the next life. Thus in human society there must be a balance between matter and spirit. We are actually spirit souls, but somehow we became encaged within the body, and we have to eat, sleep, mate, and defend. The soul itself does not need to do those things. A civilization that only looks after the body's necessities and does not care for the soul is unbalanced. Suppose one has a bird in an ornate cage, but merely polishes the cage and ignores the bird. How foolish! The bird is crying to be fed. How can the bird become happy if you only polish the cage?

People are unhappy and dissatisfied because there is no balance. Everyone simply takes care of the body, but has no information of the soul and its needs. The soul is the real substance; the body is only a covering. The care of the soul is our constitutional duty. We should know the soul's needs, not simply be busy supplying the body its comforts. Bodily comforts cannot enable anyone to exist permanently.

The real necessity of life is to supply the comforts of the soul, and the soul cannot be comforted by physical or mental adjustments. Because the soul is a different substance, it must be given spiritual sustenance. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Just as when people are ill, they are given a proper diet and proper medicine, similarly, souls encaged in bodies need Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which provides the right diet and medicine. The diet is food that has been offered to Kṛṣṇa, which counteracts karma, the cause of the illness. And the medicine is the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, which delivers the mind to the spiritual platform.

The soul can be happy only when its essential nature can be expressed. The essence of sugar is sweetness. What is the essence, or dharma, of the soul? Service.

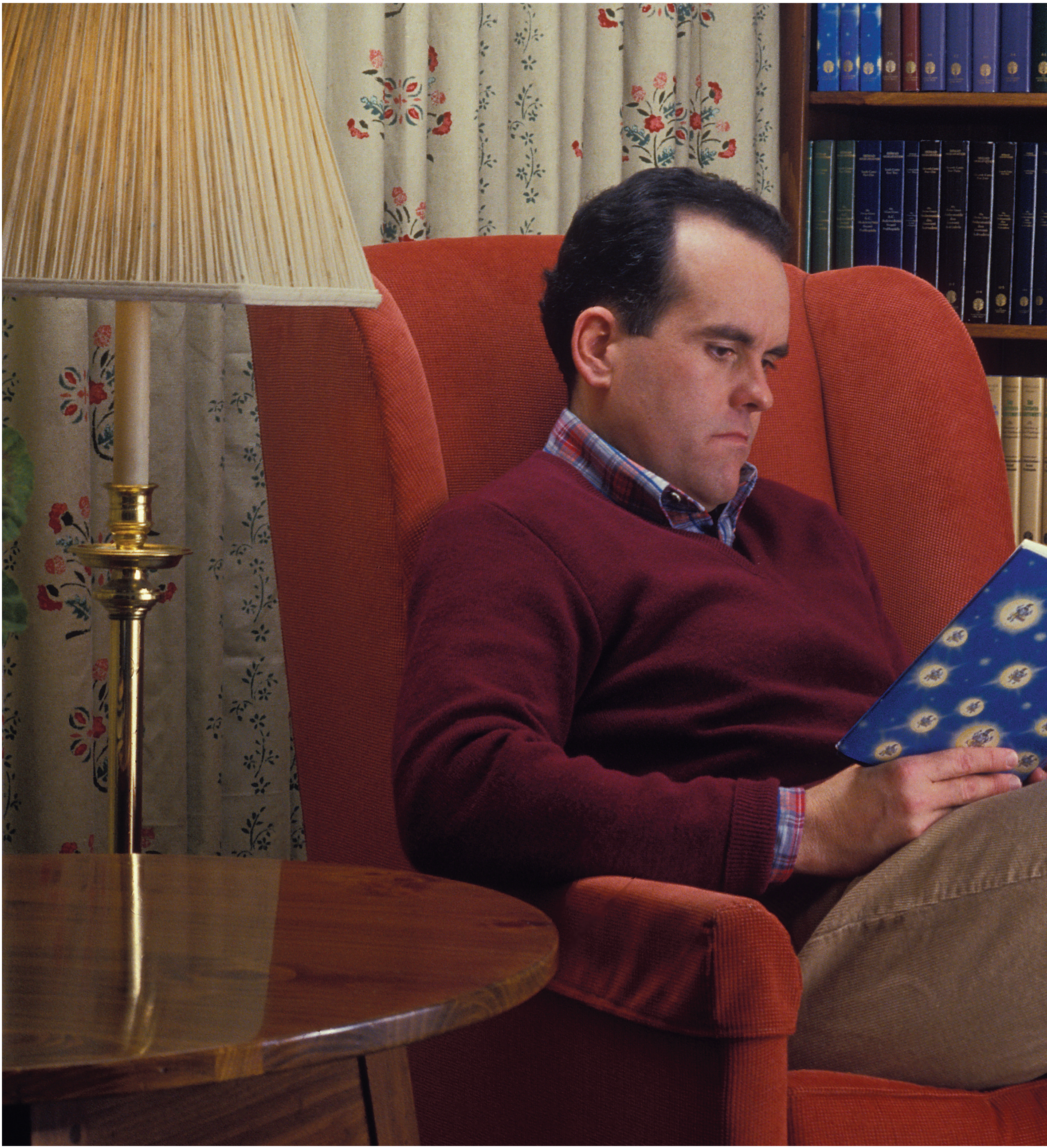
No one can say, "I do not serve anyone," because we must serve. That is our dharma. If a person has no one to serve, he keeps a cat or dog and serves it. To render service to someone else is our essential nature, but we are missing the point. Entrapped in this world, the soul adopts artificial dharmas based on misidentification with the body.

But when the soul acts on the platform of spiritual understanding, its dharma becomes clear. We learn from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.6) that the dharma of the soul is *bhakti,* loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Everyone is already a devotee: a devotee of one's country, society, family, children, or senses. But we do not love God. Therefore we are not really happy. When we offer love to the proper object, Kṛṣṇa, we become happy.

The living entity is part of the supreme living entity, Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is always full of joy. Being part of Kṛṣṇa, we also want a life of bliss and jubilation.

So we have to go to Kṛṣṇa, where everything exists in spiritual variety. We can play with Kṛṣṇa, dance with Kṛṣṇa, talk with Kṛṣṇa, fight with Kṛṣṇa, and love Kṛṣṇa. Every act in the spiritual world with Kṛṣṇa is enjoyment. ❁

Touched by Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books



When delivered by His pure representative, Kṛṣṇa's message attracts and transforms people young and old.

By Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī

"HARIBOL NANI!" I greet my grandmother as I enter her home.

Unable to get up to receive me, she stretches out her arms, ready to welcome me into her warm embrace. Although her face is wrinkled with time and her body is diseased with old age, her radiant smile and loving mood reveal her inner beauty. My eighty-five-year-old grandfather, lying on a bed nearby, also suffers from

QUEEN KUNTI
BHAGAVAD-GITA AS IT IS

the cruel fate of old age.

Greeting him, I say, "Nana, I've come to do *kīrtana* and read about Kṛṣṇa."

They look forward to this time when we can hear about and remember the glories of Kṛṣṇa together.

Nani holds a volume of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* its pages gray and wrinkled from repeated use.

I wonder, *How is it that Nani has read this holy book of eighteen volumes many times over the last twenty years?*

Then as usual, she starts speaking about the subject she is reading, not missing a single detail. Her face lights up, her strong voice booms like a young woman's, and her eyes fill with tears. With great taste she relishes the glories of the Lord. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is her favorite book, and no matter whom she speaks to, they can be assured of hearing the topics of this spiritual literature.

Nani's mother taught her the scriptures, and they would read together until the early hours of the morning.

> The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the essence of all Vedic literatures, and it is considered the ripened fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of Vedic knowledge. It has been sweetened by emanating from the mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. You who are thoughtful and who relish mellows should always try to taste this ripened fruit. O thoughtful devotees, as long as you are not absorbed in transcendental bliss, you should continue tasting this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and when you are fully absorbed in bliss, you should go on tasting its mellows forever." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.3, translation from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 25.151)

As Nani reads, Nana and I listen with careful attention. I came to help them remember the Lord and hear His glories, but I benefit from their association. Even in her advanced age, Nani's memory of scripture and the verses her mother taught her in childhood is strong and lucid.

Lord Kṛṣṇa assures us, "But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have." (*Gītā* 9.22)

We then take turns reading *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* the scripture describing the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in the guise of a devotee. We read about Lord Caitanya delivering Amogha, the son-in-law of His dear devotee Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. Amogha had blasphemed Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but despite his grievous offense, the Lord forgave him and blessed him with pure love for Kṛṣṇa. We are touched by Lord Caitanya's compassionate dealings and benevolence, and His willingness to give freely what is not easily attainable.

Nani's History

After reading, Nani tells me she had not known much about Caitanya Mahāprabhu before reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation with commentary of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and meeting the devotees of ISKCON. Her grandparents were indentured laborers who had come to South Africa from India in the 1800s, seeking greater opportunities and a better future. But their dreams were shattered when they realized they had left their motherland for long hours of torturous work and conditions of poverty like those in India. Over the decades, although they had kept their culture and traditions, they gradually lost the spiritual heritage and richness of India they had brought with them. Nani remembers her grandfather, dressed in a dhoti, walking barefoot and chanting the Lord's holy names on beads. She fondly remembers her mother, who married at the age of thirteen and had thirteen children. Living in a simple rural community, the family had a difficult life, struggling against the harsh elements. Still, those were the happiest times for Nani, who remembers carrying huge pots of water from the river on her head, covering the floor of their simple residence with cow dung, and making cow-dung patties and a fire to cook their food.

Nani's mother taught her the scriptures, and they would read together until the early hours of the morning. The family would congregate every evening to hear the *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Bhagavad-gītā* and would celebrate Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and other holy festivals. How different life was then, free from the negative influences of technology and the rat race of so-called human advancement. Although she did not have much education, Nani's love for reading was the strength that guided her in her journey toward God.

Things took a turn when Nani married into a family whose religious practices were different from hers. Nana's family followed the teachings of a Māyāvādī (impersonalist) organization, whose practices involved fire sacrifices and the chanting of *oṁ.* They did not worship the personal aspect of God as Nani's family did, and so growing up I did not see pictures of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, or any other personal form of God in their home. Still, religion formed the basis of their lives. Although Nani never forgot what her mother had taught her, she dutifully followed the practices and ideals of her new family.

My Search for God

In my childhood I was a bookworm like Nani, and perhaps because of the spiritual atmosphere I had grown up in and the thirst to know more about God, I was driven to read spiritual books, hoping they would give me answers to life's meaning and purpose. Unlike in Nani's home, a beautiful *mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa adorned our altar, and my attraction to Kṛṣṇa superseded everything else. I wanted to know more about Him. In my heart I knew He was the Supreme Lord, and I directed my prayers and thoughts to Him.

"O Lord," I would pray, "please guide me to people who worship you as the Supreme and whose lives are centered on you."

For several years in my youth, I read volumes of literature by different spiritual leaders and gurus of various faiths. I joined several religious organizations and studied and followed their practices and teachings. But I was not fully satisfied. Then, when I joined a group that solely worshiped Kṛṣṇa, I thought my prayers were finally answered. I studied under their guidance and with eagerness and faith learned to recite *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures by heart. But after a few years with this group, many of my questions were still unanswered.

Then one day at my high school library, I saw them. From one end of the shelf to the other, glistening in black and gold, was a set of books I had not seen before. I was drawn to them and began reading through their pages—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* with translation and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Every lunch break I would go there to read. I was mesmerized, as I had never before read anything with such profound clarity, depth, or wisdom. It was an entire encyclopedia on the science of God. It not only explained who God is, but every aspect of His nature, form, qualities, creation, devotees, pastimes, and so on. But what attracted me the most was Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports, wherein he explained the essence of the verses in simple language but with deep understanding and realization that penetrated my heart. More and more, I immersed myself in reading this divine literature, until I was convinced that this was what I had been looking for.

"The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy." (*Gītā* 18.61)

In my search for the Absolute Truth, different doctrines presented different thoughts, ideas, and messages that were well intentioned but vague or incomplete. Now a much more thorough understanding replaced my previous views and ideas of God. Instead of Him being only the impersonal light or divine energy, I learned about His superior feature as the most attractive spiritual person. Instead of the soul attaining *mokṣa* by merging into His existence, I understood the unique individuality of the soul and its relationship to the Supreme Soul, the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Instead of God being a person to fearfully obey, it became clear that God is a truly lovable person with divine personal attributes and that our constitutional position is to become lovers of Him.

Instead of becoming one with the universe or the "Cosmic Mind," I learned that Kṛṣṇa is the source and controller of the universe and through His agents is operating the affairs of innumerable universes. Moreover, we can return to His spiritual abode, where we can blissfully relate with Him as a servant, friend, parent, or lover. Instead of performing difficult methods of meditation and penance to achieve peace of mind and harmony with others, I learned that the simple process of chanting the names of God, as recommended for this age, cleanses the heart of the dust of millions of lifetimes and our love for the Lord is revived. Thus, not only do we become peaceful, but also our love for others naturally manifests from rekindling our love for God.

Instead of approaching God with a material motive, I was guided to call out to God without the desire for selfish materialistic gain. Instead of thinking of God only during prayer, meditation, or rituals, I understood that thoughts of Him are meant to permeate every part of my existence. Instead of rejecting or renouncing material things, I discovered that material possessions, including my body, mind, talents, and role in family and society, are intended to be used in Kṛṣṇa's service. Thus in Kṛṣṇa consciousness I can make Kṛṣṇa the center of my life in a more tangible way.

The list of valuable instructions and truths Śrīla Prabhupāda revealed through his books is endless.

For the first time I read about merciful incarnations of God like Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Jagannātha. I learned that the demigods are not equal to God but are His empowered dependent servants. I understood that the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a metaphor. The *Gītā* and other Vedic scriptures relate historical events and convey God's

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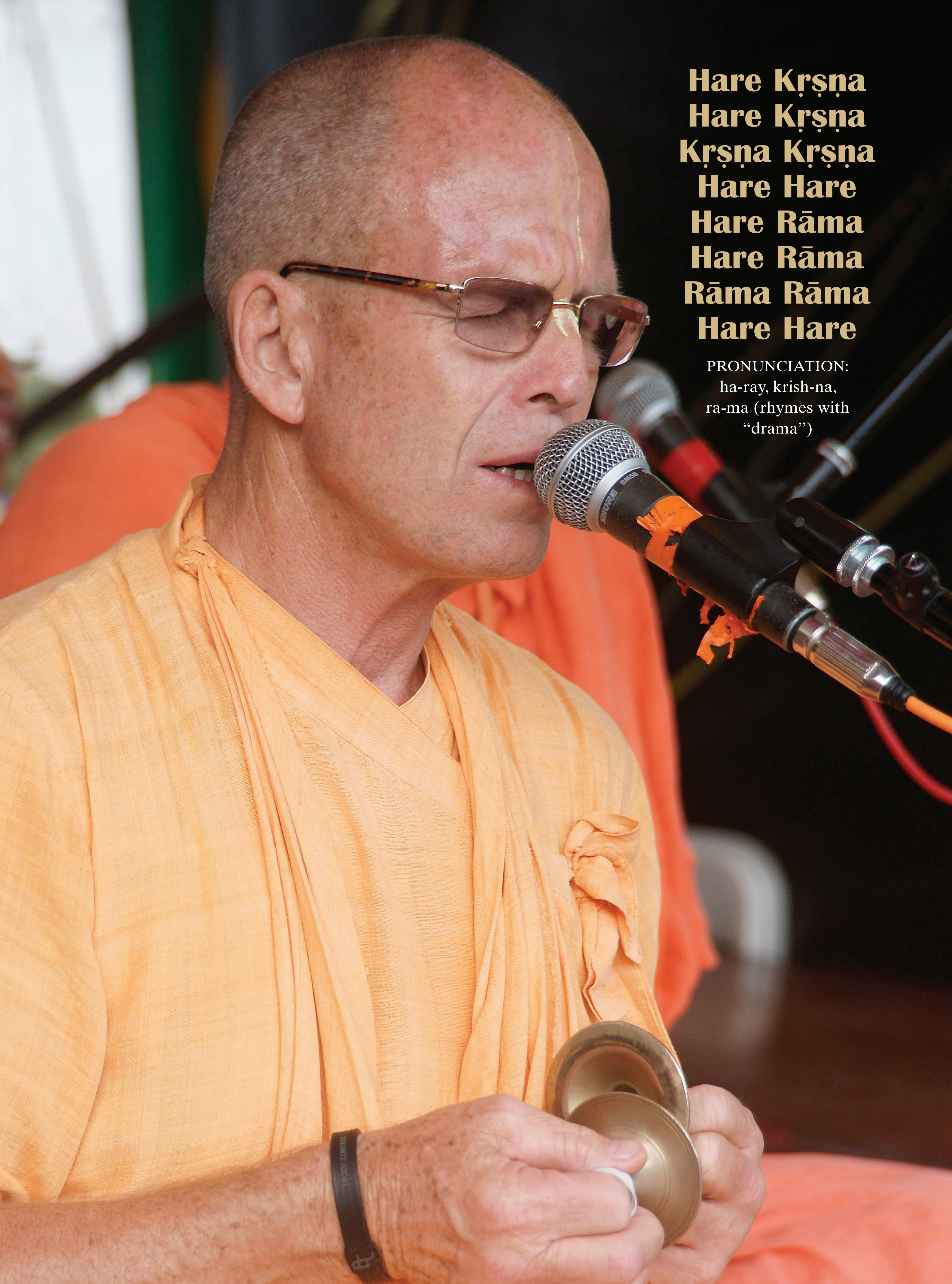
*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.



Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na,
ra-ma (rhymes with
"drama")

message. However, the scriptures can be potent only if delivered by an authorized messenger of God. Śrīla Prabhupāda was such a person. He presented the teachings of the scriptures without interpretation or adulteration. Being a bona fide spiritual master, he presented the science of love of God as a modern representative of a line of spiritual teachers coming directly from Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore his books significantly influence millions of lives throughout the world. And when I met Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers and disciples who distribute his books, I was captivated by the way they practiced its teachings.

Lives Transformed

One day, Nani accompanied me to ISKCON's magnificent Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple in Durban for the first time. As soon as she entered, she heard a Sanskrit verse her mother had taught her that glorifies Kṛṣṇa's devotees:

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and they are full of compassion for the fallen souls." She immediately realized that the Lord had led her back to the path of *bhakti,* or devotion to Him.

"In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear." (*Gītā* 2.40) Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in his purport to this verse, "Activity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or acting for the benefit of Kṛṣṇa without expectation of sense gratification, is the highest transcendental quality of work. Even a small beginning of such activity finds no impediment, nor can that small beginning be lost at any stage. Any work begun on the material plane has to be completed, otherwise the whole attempt becomes a failure. But any work begun in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has a permanent effect, even though not finished."

Nani continues to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books eagerly despite the pain in her ailing body.

"Nobody can write like Prabhupāda!" she tells me. "His words are sublime and give so much strength."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and teachings have transformed Nani's and Nana's lives, and they have abandoned their previous Māyāvāda practices of impersonalism and voidism for a life bursting with taste and joy in Kṛṣṇa's divine service. Nani continued from the point she had left in her childhood. Nana understood that his piety and adherence to righteousness would not alone save him from the effects of karma and the repeated suffering of birth, disease, old age, and death. So in their younger days they both served Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission by cooking for thousands of people during grand festivals and for ISKCON's Food for Life program. Engaging in devotional service would benefit them more than mundane pious activities, they knew. Now, at the end of their lives, they have dedicated their time to hearing and chanting about the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda reconnected them to the spiritual heritage their ancestors had left behind in India. In the same way, he fulfilled my spiritual quest by giving me more than what I had hoped for. He rescued countless lost souls from sinful activities and degraded lifestyles and brought them to pure lives of spiritual love and happiness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books appeal to any person, because they appeal to our spiritual nature as pure servants of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda fulfilled the order of his spiritual master to print the ancient Vedic texts in English and take their message of Kṛṣṇa to the western world. In doing so, he caused a spiritual revolution by revealing the Absolute Truth in its full glory. His books appeal to any person, irrespective of age, race, culture, or sectarian designation, because they appeal to our spiritual nature as pure servants of God.

My ten-year-old son, Arjuna, is also a bookworm. Apart from reading adventure fiction books of superheroes and knights, he also reads Prabhupāda's books. Fortunately, they are easily available to him.

While reading *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta,* Prabhupāda's biography, he asks me, "Do you know that when Prabhupāda was born, an astrologer predicted that at the age of seventy he would cross the ocean and give Kṛṣṇa to the world? He opened 108 temples and traveled the globe twelve times. He had two heart attacks on the ship to America. He went through so much to make people devotees of Kṛṣṇa. He wrote so many books and did many things in his old age to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How was it possible? And why did he do it?"

I ponder for a while, not fully understanding Śrīla Prabhupāda's inconceivable greatness.

"He is an empowered pure servant of Kṛṣṇa," I say, "and his love and compassion for us made it possible for him to do so much."

"Wow!" exclaims Arjuna. "Now I have to read Prabhupāda's books. I wouldn't want all his time writing these books to go to waste!" ❀

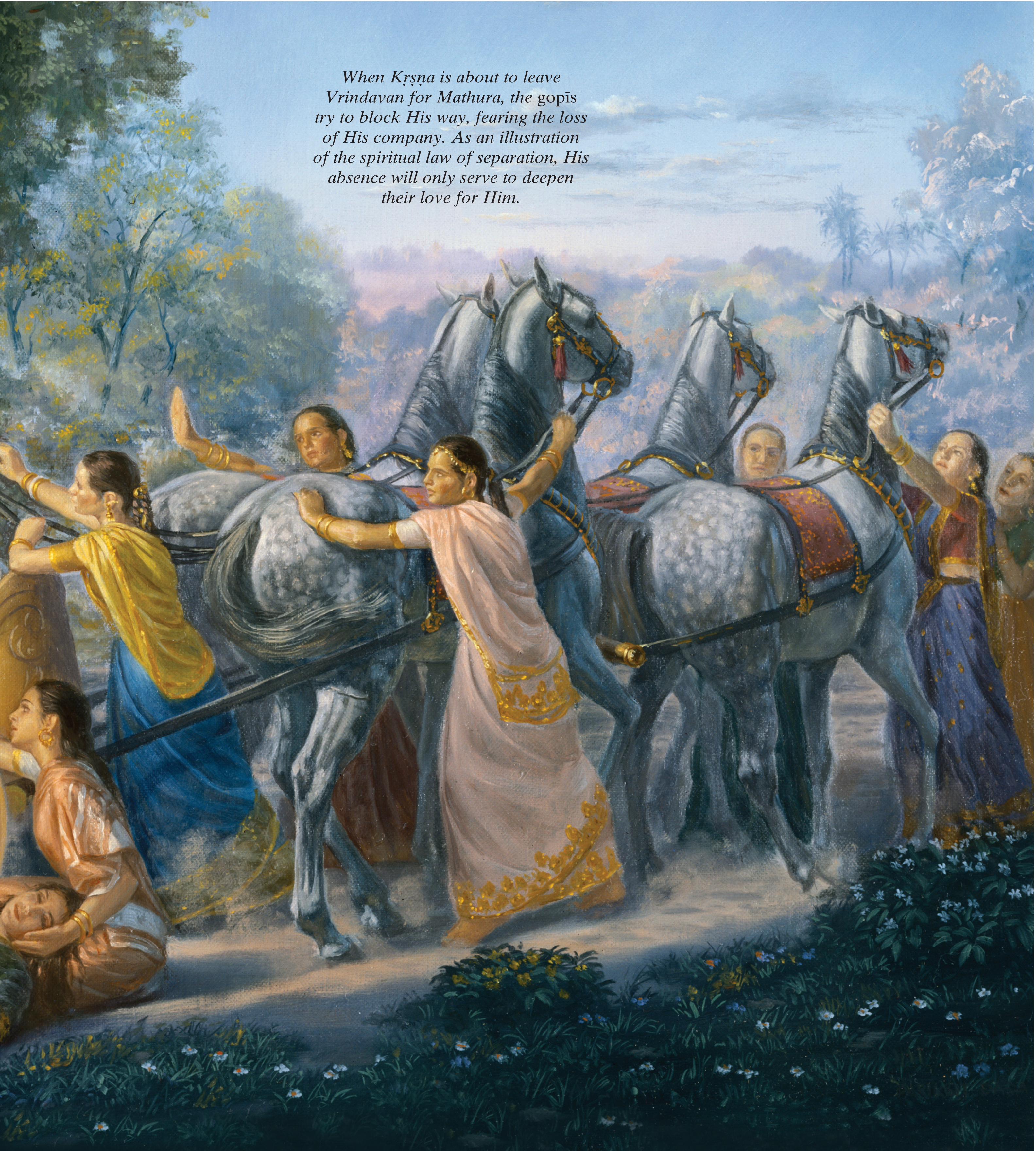
Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Holiness Girirāja Swami, lives with her husband and two children in Durban, South Africa. While this article was in production, her grandfather passed away on Śivarātrī while hearing Kṛṣṇa's holy names.

Yamarāja Dāsa

The Laws of BHAKTI

By Mukundamālā Dāsa

Far from being a sentimental activity, devotional service is based on well-defined principles that systematically guide a practitioner to ultimate perfection.



When Kṛṣṇa is about to leave Vrindavan for Mathura, the gopīs *try to block His way, fearing the loss of His company. As an illustration of the spiritual law of separation, His absence will only serve to deepen their love for Him.*

Painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT the relationship between science and religion usually end in a stalemate: Scientists accuse religionists of relying too much on faith, which they say is experimentally unverifiable, while religionists accuse scientists of relying too much on physical and chemical laws, which they say fail to measure the emotions and sentiments of a conscious living entity. The scientists fail to address or even acknowledge consciousness and its attendant needs; religionists fail to provide a satisfactory scientific and logical explanation for the practices they follow. The refusal of scientists to experiment beyond mechanistic science and the inability of religionists to present religion as a bona fide science have only widened the gap between the two parties.

A study of the Vedic scriptures, however, reveals that the true Vedic religion is not a matter of blind faith but is an actual science, verifiable by experiment. Unlike conventional religions, which force their practitioners to accept dogma on faith, the Vedic religion (also known as *sanātana-dharma, bhāgavata-dharma,* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness) repeatedly prods its students to inquire and question at every step. Sentimental practice is never encouraged. While other religions teach us to love and serve God, the beauty of the Vedic scriptures lies in their ability to explain the dynamics of this spiritual relationship by revealing the precise, well-defined principles that underlie it. A deeper understanding of this subject will nourish the faith of the faithful and satisfy the intellect of the intellectuals.

Just as iron filings get attracted to a magnet, all of us in our pure state have a natural attraction towards Kṛṣṇa.

1. The Law of Attraction

Newton's law of gravitation states that every object possessing mass attracts every other object with a certain strength, called the gravitational constant, or G. Furthermore, the effect of G (called force, or F) reduces as the distance between the two objects increases. According to the spiritual law of attraction, every spirit soul is attracted towards the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa. Being an eternal part of Kṛṣṇa, we are constitutionally meant to love and serve Him. All we need to do is uncover our loving propensity by practicing devotional principles. Just as iron filings get attracted to a magnet, all of us in our pure state have a natural attraction towards Kṛṣṇa. Lust and many other unwanted things prevent the full exhibition of these loving feelings, just as rust prevents the full attraction of iron filings towards a magnet.

The spiritual law of attraction differs from Newton's law in some areas. Whereas the attractive force (G) exerted by each mass on other masses is the same (G is a constant), the attraction (in this case, the affection or love) that Lord Kṛṣṇa has towards the wayward spirit souls is much greater than what those souls have towards Him. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "He [Kṛṣṇa] is just like an affectionate father, who is more eager to see his son than the son is to see him. There is no contradiction in such a quantitative difference in affection." (*Mukunda-mālā-stotra* 1, Purport)

The attraction between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees is unaffected by the physical distance between them, unlike the attraction (F) between two physical masses. Other material barriers, like the language in which a prayer is intoned, one's social or financial standings, or any other mundane criteria, have no effect on this spiritual relationship.

In sharp contrast to Newton's law, the attraction between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees has been known to increase with distance. Love in separation from Kṛṣṇa is described as the highest form of love, higher even than love in union with Him. The most exalted devotees, the *gopīs* of Vrindavan, experienced this form of love. After first enjoying a decade of Kṛṣṇa's association in Vrindavan during His early pastimes, they later had to undergo a century of separation from Kṛṣṇa while He spent His time in Hastinapura and Dwarka. All the while, their love for Kṛṣṇa kept increasing despite their being separated by a great distance.

Bhakti, or loving devotional service, is known as *śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī,* "that which attracts Kṛṣṇa." Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in *Jaiva-dharma,* "The devotee whose heart is infused with *śuddha-bhakti* [pure devotion] attracts the attention of Kṛṣṇa—along with that of all His close associates—by the power of his love. Love is the only way to conquer Śrī Kṛṣṇa; no other means are viable." By the power of his devotion, Prahlāda, although a five-year-old boy, could attract the Supreme Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, who appeared just to protect His dear devotee. Between a magnet and iron, it is the magnet that has the power to attract, not the iron. But with *bhakti,* the devotee—an infinitesimal spirit soul—can attract the infinite, all-powerful Kṛṣṇa.

2. The Law of Reciprocation

Like Newton's third law of motion, the law of karma states that for every action there is a reaction. However, the karmic law—an aspect of material nature, which is working under Kṛṣṇa's direction—is universal; it does not act merely in the realms of physics or chemistry. Pious actions result in pleasurable reactions, while sinful actions lead to hellish sufferings.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11), Kṛṣṇa says, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham:* "As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly." To those who consider God impersonal, He reveals Himself as the impersonal Brahman. To yogis who meditate on the form of the Lord within the heart, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself as the Paramātmā, the Supersoul, who resides in the heart of every living being. But to those who accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa is eager to reveal His supreme form of *sac-cid-ānanda:* His eternal personal form of full knowledge and bliss.

When Kṛṣṇa entered the wrestling match Kaṁsa had organized in Mathura, He appeared differently to different groups of people: "The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathura as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the king of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the yogis as the Absolute Truth, and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity." (*Bhāgavatam* 10.43.17)

Fully surrendered devotees of Kṛṣṇa receive the greatest reciprocation from the Lord. The *Caitanya-bhāgavata* relates the story of Vāsudeva Datta, a greatly powerful devotee of the Lord. Feeling extreme pain to see the sufferings of conditioned souls, Vāsudeva Datta requested Caitanya Mahāprabhu to let him suffer for the sins of everyone in the universe. The Lord was so pleased by Vāsudeva's compassion that He said, "This body of mine belongs to Vāsudeva Datta. . . . [He] may sell Me wherever he likes." (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa* 5.27–28)

Devotees are ready to sacrifice everything for the pleasure of the Lord, and the Lord is ready to give Himself to His devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "This transcendental reciprocation exists because both the Lord and the devotee are conscious. When a diamond is set in a golden ring, it looks very nice. The gold is glorified, and at the same time the diamond is glorified. The Lord and the living entity eternally glitter, and when a living entity becomes inclined to the service of the Supreme Lord he looks like gold. The Lord is a diamond, and so this combination is very nice." (*Gītā* 9.29, Purport)

The principle of reciprocation assumes extreme proportions when we offend great devotees or render service to them. The scriptures repeatedly warn us about the dangerous effects of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha,* offense at the feet of an advanced soul. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu described this as "the mad elephant offense," which can uproot and destroy the tender devotional creeper we are struggling to cultivate. The best way to avoid this is to always remain humble, expect no respect from anyone, and offer all respect to others.

On the other hand, service rendered to a pure devotee awards us untold benedictions. For example, *mahat-sevāṁ dvāram āhur vimukteḥ* (*Bhāg.* 5.5.2): A little service offered to a devotee opens immediately the doors of eternal liberation.

3. The Law of Subjugation

As the master of the universe, Kṛṣṇa controls everything and everyone. But one who has *bhakti* can control Kṛṣṇa by love. *Bhakti-yoga* therefore is superior to all other spiritual practices, like *karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga,* or *aṣṭāṅga-yoga.*

The story of King Ambarīṣa and Durvāsā Muni reveals this point clearly. Durvāsā Muni had attempted to kill the pious Ambarīṣa for an insignificant offense. But Ambarīṣa remained unfazed and took complete shelter of the Lord. To protect His dear devotee, the Lord released His personal weapon, the Sudarśana *cakra,* and destroyed the demon Durvāsā had sent to kill Ambarīṣa. The *cakra* then started chasing the Muni to kill him. Durvāsā fled the scene and approached various demigods for help. Unable to get shelter from anyone, including Indra, Brahmā, and Śiva, the great mystic finally approached Lord Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, requesting the Lord to withdraw the scorching *cakra* and thus save his life. To his surprise, the Lord expressed His inability to protect him and ordered him to beg forgiveness directly from Ambarīṣa. Lord Viṣṇu said,

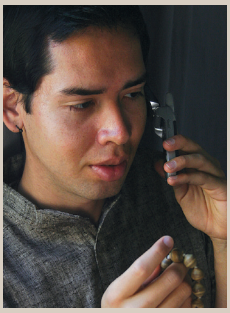
ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno
    hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
    bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

"I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me." (*Bhāg.* 9.4.63)

Only after being forgiven by His devotee, the Lord assured, would Durvāsā stop being chased by the *cakra.*

Other examples of Kṛṣṇa's subjugation to His devotees: As a small child, Kṛṣṇa would dance like a puppet when the adult *gopīs* of Vrindavan clapped their hands. During the *rāsa-līlā,* sometimes the *gopīs* would sing and Kṛṣṇa would dance just to please them.

Pure love of God is of the nature of Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, or Śrīmatī



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Rādhārāṇī, and has the power to bring Kṛṣṇa, the greatest person, under His devotee's control. The Pāṇḍavas, for example, bound Kṛṣṇa with pure affection and kept Him always near them. As Nārada Muni said, "My dear Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, all of you [the Pāṇḍavas] are extremely fortunate, for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, lives in your palace just like a human being. Great saintly persons know this very well, and therefore they constantly visit this house." (*Bhāg.* 7.10.48)

4. The Law of Unification

The perfection of *bhakti-yoga* lies in dovetailing all of our desires for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, a devotee sets aside all selfish motives and wishes to fulfill the desires of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, the desires of Kṛṣṇa and the pure devotee are one. Whenever a pure devotee speaks, he is speaking on Kṛṣṇa's behalf, presenting whatever the Lord would Himself say.

Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is so sweet that the devotee and the Lord sometimes forget their own identities. They are so much in tune with each other that there is no difference in their purposes. *Ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham:* "Whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him." (*Gītā* 9.29)

Again, in the story of Ambarīṣa and Durvāsā, the Lord makes this famous statement:

sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ
sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api

"The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them." (*Bhāg.* 9.4.68)

It is important to note that the oneness attained by a devotee is different from the oneness impersonalist philosophers imagine they will attain by merging with the Supreme. A devotee rejects such oneness as hellish because it means the end of his individual identity, and thus the end of his chance to serve the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the example of a green bird entering a green tree. Deep within the branches and leaves, the bird may not be visible to an observer standing below, but the bird never loses its existence. It enjoys the tree's fruits and flowers. A devotee who has returned to the spiritual world similarly enjoys service to Kṛṣṇa with ever-growing freshness and sweetness under the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Judge Your Progress in Bhakti

Rūpa Gosvāmī, a sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava saint and a direct disciple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, describes the systematic developments a devotee undergoes while practicing the science of *bhakti.* In the beginning one has faith (*śraddhā*) in some form of divinity or in saints or scriptures. This faith, which is compared to a seed, helps one seek out the association of saintly devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*), where the seed sprouts and takes root as a creeper. Receiving nourishment in the form of hearing and chanting the holy names and glories of Kṛṣṇa (*bhajana-kriyā*) under the guidance of devotees, the creeper grows luxuriantly. In the process, all the unwanted things in the heart that block the progress of *bhakti* go away (*anartha-nivṛtti*), clearing the path for the creeper.

Carefully cultivating spiritual practices and steering clear of all obstacles, the devotee achieves steadiness (*niṣṭha*) in *bhakti.* At this stage the waves of love of Godhead first appear. As the spiritual practices continue, the devotee's steadiness matures into intense taste (*ruci*) for devotional activities, removing all threats of the recurrence of unwanted habits. Such a person is known as an *uttama-adhikārī.*

Śivarāma Swami, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, has written *Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi,* based on past *ācāryas'* commentaries on Vaiṣṇava literature. Discussing the advanced stages of pure devotion, he writes, "As devotees cultivate that taste, they develop concentrated attachment for Kṛṣṇa (*āsakti*). That attachment polishes the heart to such an extent that at times devotees think that Kṛṣṇa

(*please turn to page 45*)

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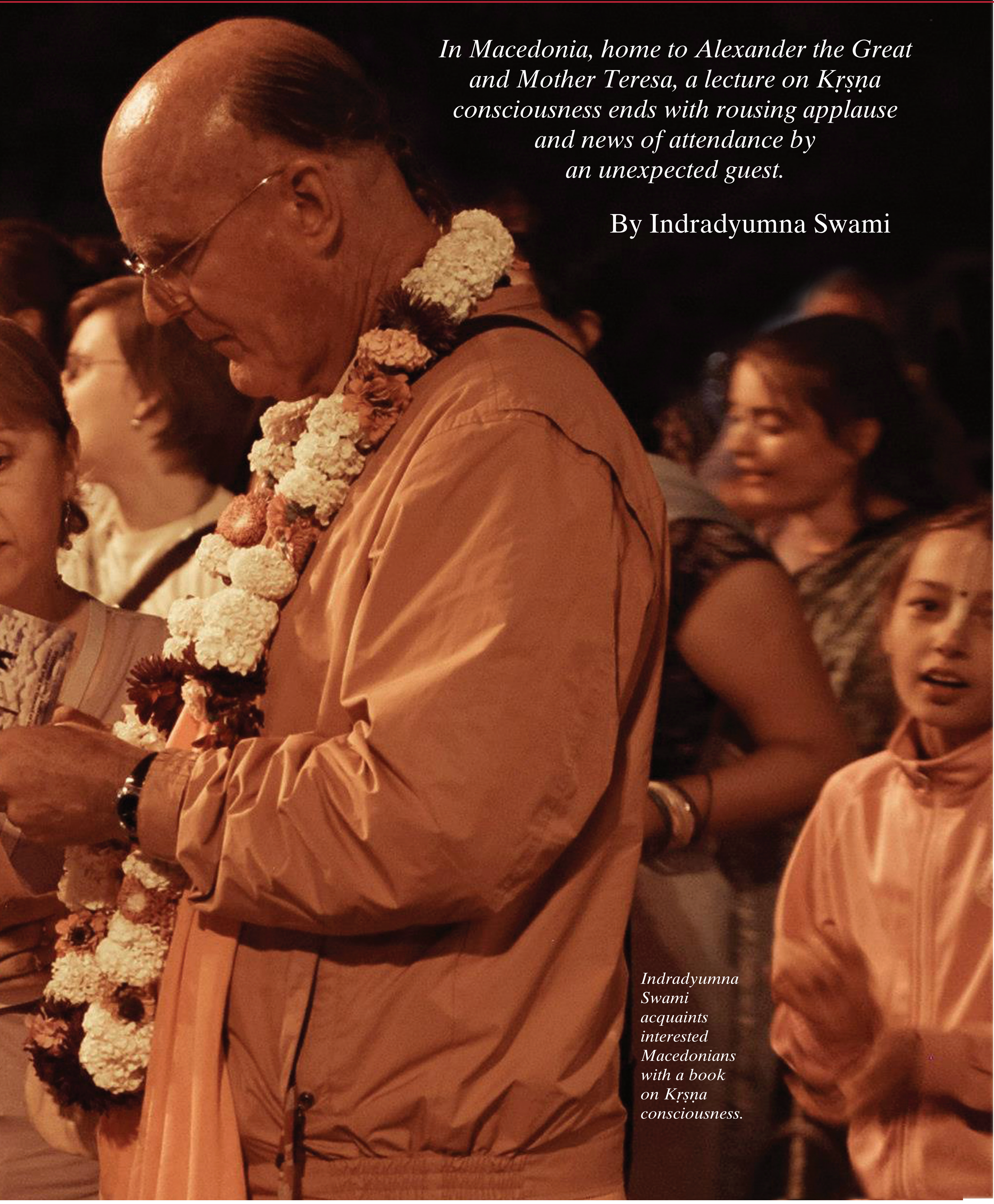
BOOK EXCERPT

MACEDONIAN
Memories

In Macedonia, home to Alexander the Great and Mother Teresa, a lecture on Kṛṣṇa consciousness ends with rousing applause and news of attendance by an unexpected guest.

By Indradyumna Swami



Indradyumna Swami acquaints interested Macedonians with a book on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I SAT IN MY ROOM in the temple building in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, taking *prasāda* and listening to a *bhajana* by devotees downstairs in the temple itself.

"That's such a sweet *bhajana,*" I said to a devotee, "and it's been going on for hours."

"Yes, Mahārāja," he said. "The Macedonians are very musically inclined. We love to sing and play musical instruments. We even have our own form of a tamboura here, a four-stringed instrument. Devotees use it often in *bhajanas.*"

Two hours later I left for the square in the city center with a group of twenty devotees. The square, renovated in recent years, is a popular place for the people of Skopje to spend warm summer evenings sitting, talking, and eating in nearby restaurants. As we approached the square I saw the huge statue of Alexander the Great.

As I read, I was so touched by the poem that I had to sit down. It was true to the spirit of a missionary's life.

"That statue is quite impressive," I said to a devotee.

"Yes," he replied. "Alexander the Great was from Macedonia. He left here to conquer the world. He built a huge empire, but it was too much to manage, and he never returned home."

I had been reading *TKG's Diary,* by Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, while traveling, and just that morning I had come across a passage where Goswami quoted Śrīla Prabhupāda on the same point.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda actually said that Alexander the Great could not maintain his large empire," I said.

"Prabhupāda said, 'Suppose I conquer Bombay and then Karachi, but in the meantime Bombay is lost? That was Alexander the Great: too much expansion.'

"Śrīla Prabhupāda said it was for this reason that he was emphasizing the importance of book selling over opening temples. He said, 'Don't make me Alexander the Great in my lifetime. People have recognized I am great. Don't make me small.'"

Inspiring Words From a Fellow Missionary

The devotee pointed to the other side of the square.

"There's also another important landmark over there," he said. "It's the home of Mother Teresa, who was born here in 1910 and left at seventeen to go to India as a missionary. The house is now a national memorial."

As we walked closer I noticed a large crowd around the house.

"Macedonians are honoring the anniversary of her departure today," the devotee said.

"Let's take a look at it while devotees are setting up the *bhajana,*" I said.

"Yes," he said as we neared the entrance. "Let's go inside. You'll be doing a program in the outdoor amphitheater tomorrow night. The amphitheater is part of the memorial. The program is advertised all over town: An Evening with Indradyumna Swami. We're expecting about a hundred and fifty people."

"Have any important people, like town officials or other dignitaries, been invited?" I asked.

"Well, not that I know of," he said. "We basically just focused on our friends and the public. But who knows? The word is out now."

As we entered the memorial, I noticed a few pamphlets and brochures about the life of Mother Teresa. I picked one up and began reading a poem she had written on the boat as she left Europe in 1928. As I read, I was so touched by the poem that I had to sit down. It was true to the spirit of a missionary's life, a life I had also chosen by taking *sannyāsa,* the renounced order of life:

Farewell

I'm leaving my dear house
And my beloved land
To steamy Bengal go I
To a distant shore.

I'm leaving my old friends
Forsaking family and home
My heart draws me onward
To serve my Christ.

Goodbye, O mother dear
May God be with you all
A Higher Power compels me
Toward torrid India.

The ship moves slowly ahead
Cleaving the ocean waves,
As my eyes take one last look
At Europe's dear shores.

Bravely standing on the deck
Joyful, peaceful of mien,
Christ's happy little one,
His new bride-to-be.

In her hand a cross of iron
On which the Savior hangs,
While her eager soul offers there
Its painful sacrifice.

O God, accept this sacrifice
Help, please, Thy creature
To glorify Thy Name!

In return, I only ask of Thee,
O most kind Father of us all:
Let me save at least one soul—
One you already know.

Fine and pure as summer dew
Her soft warm tears begin to flow,
Sealing and sanctifying now
Her painful sacrifice.

—Gonxhe Bojaxhiu

Happy to Be on the Streets

"Mahārāja," the devotee said, rousing me from my absorption, "we

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Adapted from *Diary of a Traveling Monk,* Volume 13, Chapter 4.

should get going. The devotees are already doing *bhajana* in the square."

As we hurried to where the devotees were singing, I noticed a large crowd around them. It reminded me of our public *kīrtanas* in Poland in the early 1990s. Upon reaching the devotees I was again overwhelmed by the beauty of the music and the singing. I stood quietly for several minutes listening and then spoke to the devotee with me.

"I think all of you must have been Gandharvas in your last life," I said. "Lord Caitanya sent you here to liberate these people."

I went up to a devotee giving out *prasāda* sweets from a basket.

"Would you mind giving me the basket and letting me distribute the *prasāda*?" I asked her.

As I gradually made my way to the other side of the square with the basket, I was surprised that not a single person refused the *prasāda*. The sound of the *kīrtana* soon faded into the distance. Small groups of elderly women chatted on benches while their husbands played cards on rustic wooden tables. A number of young couples walked past me, obviously surprised by my bright saffron robes, but everyone was courteous and respectful. In fact, several times after a short discussion people invited me home for dinner. One elderly couple even asked if I needed a place to stay that night.

This is where I want to be, I thought. *It's where I am happiest: distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the street.*

I laughed to myself thinking that even the fumes from passing cars were exhilarating, as they reminded me of the years I spent distributing books and doing *harināma* in cities around the world.

After forty-five minutes a devotee came looking for me.

"Mahārāja" he said, "the devotees would like you to lead *bhajana*."

When we arrived back at the *bhajana* party I took the microphone and gave a talk, one that I've given a thousand times on the street.

I could do this forever, I thought as I spoke. *In fact, this is the path to immortality.*

I then remembered one of my favorite verses: "In public places I glorify Your mercy, which is granted to even the lowest creature and which enables me, even though I am lowborn, to live in this forest of Vraja, the place where Your great devotees, filled with pure love for You, aspire to take birth even as a blade of grass." (Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Utkalikā-vallari,* Verse 65)

In downtown Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, devotees chant, distribute books, and invite people to Indradyumna Swami's lecture.

The Security Team Enters

The next morning, after a blissful program accentuated by more beautiful *bhajanas,* everyone started preparing for the evening program. Later, as we drove into town, I asked the devotees if there would be security at the amphitheater. Macedonia used to be part of Yugoslavia, and I thought of several incidents of violence I'd encountered years earlier in Croatia and Bosnia.

"No need," a devotee said. "We generally don't have problems."

When we arrived at 8:00 P.M. the devotees were just starting the *bhajana.*

"Fallen angels," I said to myself, smiling as their melodious *kīrtana* filled the amphitheater and the square beyond. "Who would not be attracted?"

Soon the outdoor theater filled with guests. When the *bhajana* finished I took my seat in front of the crowd. As I was adjusting my microphone and speaking to my translator, I suddenly noticed five heavy-set well-dressed men enter the amphitheater and take up strategic positions around the festival program.

Noticing small microphones and wires sticking out from behind their ears, I thought they must be a security team. Looking off to the left, at the entrance to the program, I noticed a smaller man, most likely the head of the team, standing with two guards on either side of him.

I guess it is actually a little dangerous down here, I thought, *but the devotees probably didn't want* *to alarm me. They must have hired these guys just in case something does happen.*

My mind peaceful, knowing that any disturbances would be easily dealt with, I picked up a *Bhagavad-gītā* and began my lecture. The audience was attentive and appreciating my talk, so I went deeper into the philosophy, even explaining who Kṛṣṇa is: His name, fame, form, and pastimes.

Then I stressed that the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is practical in our modern age. I quoted Śrīla Prabhupāda, who said that we have spiritual solutions to material problems. People would nod when they agreed with a point I was making, especially the chief of the security team.

In just short of an hour I finished my talk. I felt embarrassed by the rousing applause.

"I only did my duty as a *sannyāsī,*" I said to my translator.

As I rose to make my way to the book table, I noticed the security team moving quickly to the exit.

Why aren't they staying until the end of the program? I wondered.

When I arrived at the book table, there was a crowd waiting for me to sign their newly purchased books. Pen in hand, I set about signing the books, as well as writing a few words of encouragement.

Suddenly a breathless devotee ran up to me.

"Mahārāja!" he said. "Wasn't that amazing! It's just incredible! I can't believe it."

"What happened?" I said.

"You didn't see?" he said. "The Prime Minister of our country attended your lecture. He arrived just as you began and stood at the entrance with guards on either side of him. He stayed to the very end of your talk."

"I saw the security," I said, "but I didn't know the Prime Minister was here. That certainly is the icing on the cake of a wonderful visit to Macedonia."

"There's also the cherry on top of the icing," said the devotee with a big smile.

"And what could that possibly be?" I said.

"The Prime Minister sent a message with his secretary saying that he loved your talk."

I shook my head.

Lord Caitanya's mercy has no limits, I thought.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading all over the world simply by describing Kṛṣṇa. We have published many books, including *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in seventeen volumes, four hundred pages each, as well as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *The Nectar of Devotion.* We are also publishing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in sixty volumes. Wherever a speaker holds discourses from these books and an audience hears him, this will create a good and auspicious situation. Therefore the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be done very carefully by the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, especially the *sannyāsīs.* This will create an auspicious atmosphere." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.1.32, Purport) ❀

Indradyumna Swami travels around the world teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For more information, visit his website: travelingmonk.com.

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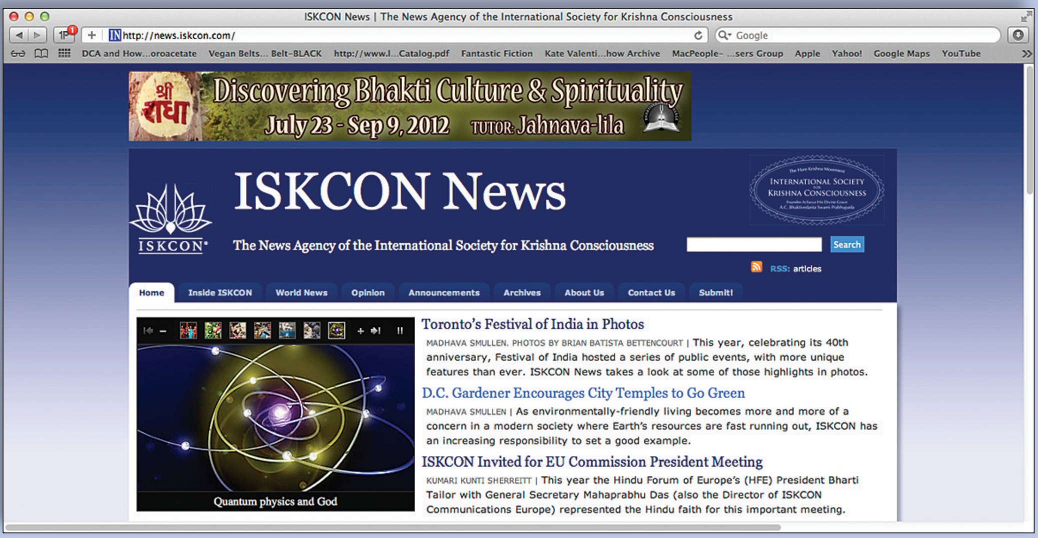
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Quantum physics and God

Toronto's Festival of India in Photos

MADHAVA SMULLEN. PHOTOS BY BRIAN BATISTA BETTENCOURT | This year, celebrating its 40th anniversary, Festival of India hosted a series of public events, with more unique features than ever. ISKCON News takes a look at some of those highlights in photos.

D.C. Gardener Encourages City Temples to Go Green

MADHAVA SMULLEN | As environmentally-friendly living becomes more and more of a concern in a modern society where Earth's resources are fast running out, ISKCON has an increasing responsibility to set a good example.

ISKCON Invited for EU Commission President Meeting

KUMARI KUNTI SHERREITT | This year the Hindu Forum of Europe's (HFE) President Bharti Tailor with General Secretary Mahaprabhu Das (also the Director of ISKCON Communications Europe) represented the Hindu faith for this important meeting.

The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and iskcon.com, run by ISKCON Communications, maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what's happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to www.news.iskcon.com.

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

SUNĪTI, DHRUVA'S INSTRUCTING GURU

While Dhruva Mahārāja boards a transcendental airplane to travel to the spiritual world, his mother, who directed him toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness, boards a similar plane.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 12

32 स च स्वर्लोकमारोक्ष्यन् सुनीतिं जननीं ध्रुवः
अन्वस्मरदगं हित्वा दीनां यास्ये त्रिविष्टपम्

sa ca svarlokam ārokṣyan
sunītiṁ jananīṁ dhruvaḥ
anvasmarad agaṁ hitvā
dīnāṁ yāsye tri-viṣṭapam

saḥ—he; *ca*—also; *svaḥ-lokam*—to the celestial planet; *ārokṣyan*—about to ascend; *sunītim*—Sunīti; *jananīm*—mother; *dhruvaḥ*—Dhruva Mahārāja; *anvasmarat*—immediately remembered; *agam*—difficult to attain; *hitvā*—leaving behind; *dīnām*—poor; *yāsye*—I shall go; *tri-viṣṭapam*—to the Vaikuṇṭha planet.

Dhruva was seated in the transcendental airplane, which was just about to start, when he remembered his poor mother, Sunīti. He thought to himself, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuṇṭha planet and leave behind my poor mother?"

PURPORT: ① Dhruva had a feeling of obligation to his mother, Sunīti. It was Sunīti who had given him the clue which had now enabled him to be personally carried to the Vaikuṇṭha planet by the associates of Lord Viṣṇu. He now remembered her and wanted to take her with him. ② Actually, Dhruva Mahārāja's mother, Sunīti, was his *patha-pradarśaka-guru. Patha-pradarśaka-guru* means "the guru, or the spiritual master, who shows the way." Such a guru is sometimes called *śikṣā-guru.* Although Nārada Muni was his *dīkṣā-guru* (initiating spiritual master), Sunīti, his mother, was the first who gave him instruction on how to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the duty of the *śikṣā-guru* or *dīkṣā-guru* to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to śāstric injunctions, there is no difference between *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru,* and generally the *śikṣā-guru* later on becomes the *dīkṣā-guru.* Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja's *dīkṣā-guru.* Still, he was not less obliged to Sunīti. There was no question of carrying Nārada Muni to Vaikuṇṭhaloka, but Dhruva Mahārāja thought of his mother.

Whatever plan the Supreme Personality of Godhead contemplates immediately fructifies. Similarly, a devotee who is completely dependent on the Supreme Lord can also fulfill his wishes by the grace of the Lord. The Lord

(1) Why did Dhruva have a feeling of obligation to his mother?
(2) What is the Sanskrit term for the guru who shows the way?

fulfills His wishes independently, but a devotee fulfills his wishes simply by being dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore as soon as Dhruva Mahārāja thought of his poor mother, he was assured by the associates of Viṣṇu that Sunīti was also going to Vaikuṇṭhaloka, in another plane. Dhruva Mahārāja had thought that he was going alone to Vaikuṇṭhaloka, leaving behind his mother, which was not very auspicious because people would criticize him for going alone to Vaikuṇṭhaloka and not carrying with him Sunīti, who had given him so much. But Dhruva also considered that he was not personally the Supreme. Therefore, if Kṛṣṇa fulfilled his desires, only then would it be possible. Kṛṣṇa could immediately understand his mind, and He told Dhruva that his mother was also going with him. ③ This incident proves that a pure devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja can fulfill all his desires; by the grace of the Lord, he becomes exactly like the Lord, and thus whenever he thinks of anything, his wish is immediately fulfilled.

33 इति व्यवसितं तस्य व्यवसाय सुरोत्तमौ
दर्शयामासतुर्देवीं पुरो यानेन गच्छतीम्

iti vyavasitaṁ tasya
vyavasāya surottamau
darśayām āsatur devīṁ
puro yānena gacchatīm

iti—thus; *vyavasitam*—contemplation; *tasya*—of Dhruva; *vyavasāya*—understanding; *sura-uttamau*—the two chief associates; *darśayām āsatuḥ*—showed (to him); *devīm*—exalted Sunīti; *puraḥ*—before; *yānena*—by airplane; *gacchatīm*—going forward.

The great associates of Vaikuṇṭhaloka, Nanda and Sunanda, could understand the mind of Dhruva Mahārāja, and thus they showed him that his mother, Sunīti, was going forward in another plane.

PURPORT: This incident proves that the *śikṣā-* or *dīkṣā-guru* who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Mahārāja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced. Although Sunīti was an instructor to Dhruva Mahārāja, she could not go to the forest because she was a woman, nor could she execute austerities and penances as Dhruva Mahārāja did. Still, Dhruva Mahārāja was able to take his mother with him. Similarly, Prahlāda Mahārāja also delivered his atheistic father, Hiraṇyakaśipu. The conclusion is that a disciple or an offspring who is a very strong devotee can carry with him to Vaikuṇṭhaloka either his father, mother, or *śikṣā-* or *dīkṣā-guru.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to say, "If I could perfectly deliver even one soul back home, back to Godhead, I would think my mission—propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness—to be successful." The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading now all over the world, and sometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Mahārāja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikuṇṭhaloka.

(3) Why can a pure devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja fulfill all his desires?
(4) How did Dhruva's body change while boarding the Vaikuṇṭha airplane?
(5) What instructions had Sunīti given to five-year-old Dhruva?

34 तत्र तत्र प्रशंसद्भिः पथि वैमानिकैः सुरैः
अवकीर्यमाणो ददृशे कुसुमैः क्रमशो ग्रहान्

tatra tatra praśaṁsadbhiḥ
pathi vaimānikaiḥ suraiḥ
avakīryamāṇo dadṛśe
kusumaiḥ kramaśo grahān

tatra tatra—here and there; *praśaṁsadbhiḥ*—by persons engaged in the praise of Dhruva Mahārāja; *pathi*—on the path; *vaimānikaiḥ*—carried by different types of airplanes; *suraiḥ*—by the demigods; *avakīryamāṇaḥ*—being covered; *dadṛśe*—could see; *kusumaiḥ*—by flowers; *kramaśaḥ*—one after another; *grahān*—all the planets of the solar system.

While Dhruva Mahārāja was passing through space, he gradually saw all the planets of the solar system, and on the path he saw all the demigods in their airplanes showering flowers upon him like rain.

PURPORT: There is a Vedic version, *yasmin vijñāte sarvam evaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati* (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.3), which means that by knowing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, everything becomes known to the devotee. Similarly, by going to the planet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can know all the other planetary systems on the path to Vaikuṇṭha. We should remember that Dhruva Mahārāja's body was different from our bodies. ④ While boarding the Vaikuṇṭha airplane, his body changed to a completely spiritual golden hue. No one can surpass the higher planets in a material body, but when one gets a spiritual body he can travel not only to the higher planetary system of this material world, but even to the still higher planetary system known as Vaikuṇṭhaloka. It is well known that Nārada Muni travels everywhere, both in the spiritual and material worlds.

It should be noted also that while Sunīti was going to Vaikuṇṭhaloka she also changed her body into spiritual form. Like Śrī Sunīti, every mother should train her child to become a devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja. ⑤ Sunīti instructed her son, even at the age of five years, to be unattached to worldly affairs and to go to the forest to search out the Supreme Lord. She never desired that her son remain at home comfortably without ever undertaking austerities and penances to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Every mother, like Sunīti, must take care of her son and train him to become a *brahmacārī* from the age of five years and to undergo austerities and penances for spiritual realization. ⑥ The benefit will be that if her son becomes a strong devotee like Dhruva, certainly not only will he be transferred back home, back to Godhead, but she will also be transferred with him to the spiritual world, even though she may be unable to undergo austerities and penances in executing devotional service.

35 त्रिलोकीं देवयानेन सोऽतिव्रज्य मुनीनपि
परस्ताद्यद् ध्रुवगतिर्विष्णोः पदमथाभ्यगात्

tri-lokīṁ deva-yānena
so ’tivrajya munīn api
parastād yad dhruva-gatir
viṣṇoḥ padam athābhyagāt

tri-lokīm—the three planetary systems; *deva-yānena*—by the transcendental airplane; *saḥ*—Dhruva; *ativrajya*—having surpassed; *munīn*—great sages; *api*—even; *parastāt*—beyond; *yat*—which; *dhruva-gatiḥ*—Dhruva, who attained permanent life; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Lord Viṣṇu; *padam*—abode; *atha*—then; *abhyagāt*—achieved.

Dhruva Mahārāja thus surpassed the seven planetary systems of the great sages who are known as saptarṣi. Beyond that region, he achieved the transcendental situation of permanent life in the planet where Lord Viṣṇu lives.

PURPORT: ⑦ The airplane was piloted by the two chief associates of Lord Viṣṇu, namely Sunanda and Nanda. Only such spiritual astronauts can pilot their airplane beyond the seven planets and arrive in the region of eternal blissful life. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* also (*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo ’nyaḥ*) that beyond this planetary system begins the spiritual sky, where everything is permanent and blissful. The planets there are known as Viṣṇuloka or Vaikuṇṭhaloka. Only there can one get an eternal blissful life of knowledge. Below Vaikuṇṭhaloka is the material universe, where Lord Brahmā and others in Brahmaloka can live until the annihilation of this universe; but that life is not permanent. That is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (*ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ*). Even if one goes to the topmost planet, one cannot achieve eternal life. ⑧ Only by arriving in Vaikuṇṭhaloka can one live an eternally blissful life.

36 यद् भ्राजमानं स्वरुचैव सर्वतो
लोकास्त्रयो ह्यनु विभ्राजन्त एते
यन्नाव्रजञ्जन्तुषु येऽननुग्रहा
व्रजन्ति भद्राणि चरन्ति येऽनिशम्

yad bhrājamānaṁ sva-rucaiva sarvato
lokās trayo hy anu vibhrājanta ete
yan nāvrajañ jantuṣu ye ’nanugrahā
vrajanti bhadrāṇi caranti ye ’niśam

yat—which planet; *bhrājamānam*—illuminating; *sva-rucā*—by self-effulgence; *eva*—only; *sarvataḥ*—everywhere; *lokāḥ*—planetary systems; *trayaḥ*—three; *hi*—certainly; *anu*—thereupon; *vibhrājante*—give off light; *ete*—these; *yat*—which planet; *na*—not; *avrajan*—have reached; *jantuṣu*—to living entities; *ye*—those who; *ananugrahāḥ*—not merciful; *vrajanti*—reach; *bhadrāṇi*—welfare activities; *caranti*—engage in; ye—those who; *aniśam*—constantly.

The self-effulgent Vaikuṇṭha planets, by whose illumination alone all the illuminating planets within this material world give off reflected light, cannot be reached by those who are not merciful to other living entities. Only persons who constantly engage in welfare activities for other living entities can reach the Vaikuṇṭha planets.

PURPORT: Here is a description of two aspects of the Vaikuṇṭha planets. The first is that in the Vaikuṇṭha sky there is no need of the sun and moon. This is confirmed by the *Upaniṣads* as well as *Bhagavad-gītā* (*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ*). In the spiritual world the Vaikuṇṭhalokas are themselves illuminated; there is therefore no need of sun, moon, or electric light. It is in fact the illumination of the Vaikuṇṭhalokas which is reflected in the material sky. Only by this reflection are the suns in the material universes illuminated; after the illumination of the sun, all the stars and moons are illuminated. In other words, all the luminaries in the material sky borrow illumination from Vaikuṇṭhaloka. From this material world, however, people can be transferred to the Vaikuṇṭhaloka, if they incessantly engage in welfare activities for all other living entities. ⑨ Such incessant welfare activities can really be performed only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no philanthropic work within this

(6) What is the benefit for a mother who trains her son to become a strong devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja?
(7) What are the names of the two chief associates of Lord Viṣṇu who piloted Dhruva’s plane?
(8) Where must one go to attain an eternally blissful life?
(9) What is the only way to incessantly engage in welfare activities for all living entities?

material world but Kṛṣṇa consciousness that can engage a person twenty-four hours a day.

A Kṛṣṇa conscious being is always engaged in planning how to take all of suffering humanity back home, back to Godhead. Even if one is not successful in reclaiming all the fallen souls back to Godhead, still, because he is Kṛṣṇa conscious, his path to Vaikuṇṭhaloka is open. He personally becomes qualified to enter the Vaikuṇṭhalokas, and if anyone follows such a devotee, he also enters into Vaikuṇṭhaloka. Others, who engage in envious activities, are known as *karmīs. Karmīs* are envious of one another. Simply for sense gratification, they can kill thousands of innocent animals. *Jñānīs* are not as sinful as *karmīs,* but they do not try to reclaim others back to Godhead. They perform austerities for their own liberation. Yogis are also engaged in self-aggrandizement by trying to attain mystic powers. But devotees, Vaiṣṇavas, who are servants of the Lord, come forward in the actual field of work in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to reclaim fallen souls. Only Kṛṣṇa conscious persons are eligible to enter into the spiritual world. ⑩ That is clearly stated in this verse and is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā,* wherein the Lord says that there is no one dearer to Him than those who preach the gospel of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the world.

37 शान्ताः समदृशः शुद्धाः सर्वभूतानुरञ्जनाः
यान्त्यञ्जसाच्युतपदमच्युतप्रियबान्धवाः

śāntāḥ sama-dṛśaḥ śuddhāḥ
sarva-bhūtānurañjanāḥ
yānty añjasācyuta-padam
acyuta-priya-bāndhavāḥ

śāntāḥ—peaceful; *sama-dṛśaḥ*—equipoised; *śuddhāḥ*—cleansed, purified; *sarva*—all; *bhūta*—living entities; *anurañjanāḥ*—pleasing; *yānti*—go; *añjasā*—easily; *acyuta*—of the Lord; *padam*—to the abode; *acyuta-priya*—with devotees of the Lord; *bāndhavāḥ*—friends.

Persons who are peaceful, equipoised, cleansed, and purified, and who know the art of pleasing all other living entities, keep friendship only with devotees of the Lord; they alone can very easily achieve the perfection of going back home, back to Godhead.

PURPORT: The description of this verse fully indicates that only devotees are eligible to enter into the kingdom of Godhead. The first point stated is that devotees are peaceful, for they have no demands for their personal sense gratification. They are simply dedicated to the service of the Lord. ⑪ *Karmīs* cannot be peaceful because they have immense demands for sense gratification. As for *jñānīs,* they cannot be peaceful because they are too busy trying to attain liberation or merge into the existence of the Supreme. Similarly, yogis are also restless to get mystic power. But a devotee is peaceful because he is fully surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thinks of himself as completely helpless; just as a child feels complete peace in depending on the parent, so a devotee is completely peaceful, for he depends on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

(10) What does Lord Kṛṣṇa say about those who preach the gospel of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the world?
(11) Why are *karmīs, jñānīs,* and yogis not peaceful?

A devotee is equipoised. He sees everyone on the same transcendental platform. A devotee knows that although a conditioned soul has a particular type of body according to his past fruitive activities, factually everyone is part of the Supreme Lord. A devotee sees all living entities with spiritual vision and does not discriminate on the platform of the bodily concept of life. Such qualities develop only in the association of devotees. Without the association of devotees, one cannot advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, we have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Factually, whoever lives in this society automatically develops Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Devotees are dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is only dear to devotees. On this platform only can one make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Persons in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotees of the Lord, can please everyone, as is evident in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We invite everyone, without discrimination; we request everyone to sit down and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and take as much *prasāda* as we can supply, and thus everyone is pleased with us. This is the qualification. *Sarva-bhūtānurañjanāḥ.* As for purification, no one can be more pure than devotees. Anyone who once utters the name of Viṣṇu immediately becomes purified, inside and outside (*yaḥ smaret puṇḍarīkākṣam*). Since a devotee constantly chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, no contamination of the material world can touch him. He is, therefore, actually purified. *Muci haya śuci haya yadi kṛṣṇa bhaje.* It is said that even a cobbler or person born in the family of a cobbler can be elevated to the position of a *brāhmaṇa* (*śuci*) if he takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Any person who is purely Kṛṣṇa conscious and who engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the purest in the whole universe.

38 इत्युत्तानपदः पुत्रो ध्रुवः कृष्णपरायणः
अभूत्त्रयाणां लोकानां चूडामणिरिवामलः

ity uttānapadaḥ putro
dhruvaḥ kṛṣṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
abhūt trayāṇāṁ lokānāṁ
cūḍā-maṇir ivāmalaḥ

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

A New Body at Every Moment

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in July 1975 in Denver, Colorado. It begins in an automobile and continues outside.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yesterday you were putting forward the idea that the body is no more than a machine. We also accept that. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *yantrārūḍhāni:* "The body is a machine." The word *yantra* means "machine." But at the same time you pointed out that the body is growing. Does a machine such as a car grow?

Disciple: Does a car grow? [*Laughs*] No, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

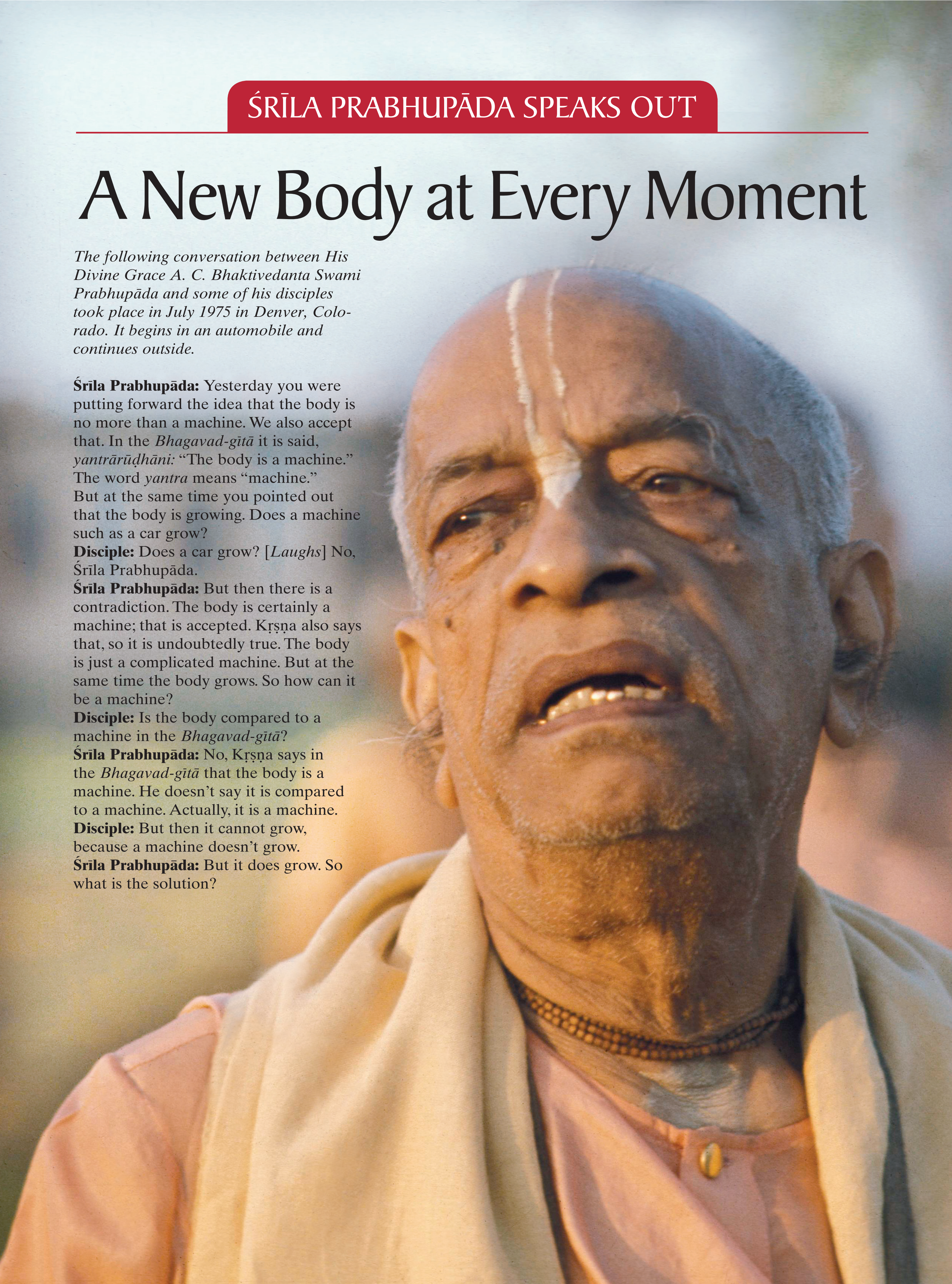
Śrīla Prabhupāda: But then there is a contradiction. The body is certainly a machine; that is accepted. Kṛṣṇa also says that, so it is undoubtedly true. The body is just a complicated machine. But at the same time the body grows. So how can it be a machine?

Disciple: Is the body compared to a machine in the *Bhagavad-gītā*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the body is a machine. He doesn't say it is compared to a machine. Actually, it is a machine.

Disciple: But then it cannot grow, because a machine doesn't grow.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But it does grow. So what is the solution?



Disciple: The answer, I think, is that the body is changing at every second.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Take, for example, this car we are riding in. It is simply a machine. Now, if I want a bigger car, I have to purchase another car. It is not that this car will grow. Or suppose you have a big car and it is too costly to maintain. You want a smaller car. So, you cannot contract your sedan and make it into a smaller car. You require to purchase another car. Similarly, a child cannot have sex in his child's body. If he wants to enjoy sex, he must have another body, an adult's body. This is such a simple thing, but the rascals cannot understand how nature is supplying us with different machines, different bodies, at every moment.

Disciple: I think all of this is beyond the present level of scientific knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because it is all happening automatically, by the inconceivable energy of Kṛṣṇa: *parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca.* Kṛṣṇa's potencies are working so wonderfully and so swiftly that you cannot see how things are going on.

Concerning how our body is changing at every moment, the example of the movie spool is very appropriate. Each tiny picture is different, but when the movie is shown through a projector, you cannot understand that. It seems to be one smoothly running picture, but actually in the background there are many, many different pictures. In one picture you will find that the hand is here, in the next picture the hand is there, in the next it is here. . . . But when the pictures are all shown very rapidly, the hand seems to be moving. As soon as you stop the projector, however, the hand becomes fixed in one position.

So, if an ordinary cinema picture can create this illusion, how much greater is the illusion created by the subtle workings of nature and the bodily machine. People do not know that at each second they are being supplied a different body.

How can the rascals know this? They have no brain—all dull-headed materialistic *mūḍhas* [fools]. They cannot understand this. But this is the process that is going on. I want a certain thing, a certain kind of body, and nature supplies it.

Disciple: But it's true that sometimes we desire a certain kind of body, or let's say a certain ability—like playing music—yet we aren't ever able to do it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. You have to be qualified by your karma to get a certain kind of body. Now, whatever Kṛṣṇa wants, He can do—but you are not independent like Him. You are dependent on nature, and your position is very insignificant. But Kṛṣṇa can, as soon as He wishes, immediately do anything. This is also mentioned in the Bible: "God said, 'Let there be creation,'" and there was creation immediately. But you cannot do that. You may desire something, but nature will supply you according to what you deserve.

Disciple: The scientists say that every seven years the whole body changes—all the molecules are replaced in that time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not every seven years. From the medical point of view, the blood corpuscles are changing at every moment.

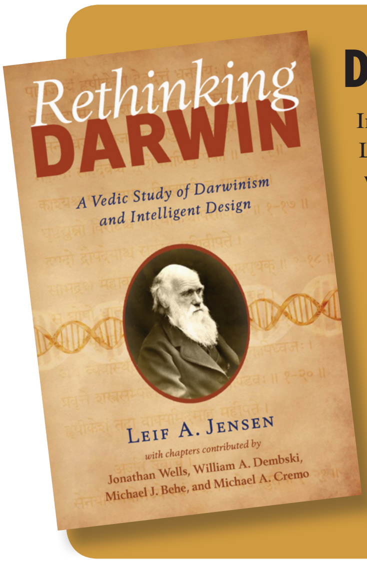
Disciple: They're totally different?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: New blood cells are constantly coming into being, and the old ones are being destroyed. So, you cannot say that the bodily machine is growing. That is fallacious. You are actually getting a new machine at every moment.

[*Everyone gets out of the car.*] Whatever you deserve, you will receive from the material nature. You may desire something, but at the same time you may deserve something else. So your desire will not be fulfilled. For example, the impersonalist rascals say, "I desire to become God." But that kind of desire will never be fulfilled. So we say, "First deserve, then desire."

Disciple: It all depends on our qualification, doesn't it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Your position is very minute. So you can desire up to a certain limit. It is not that you can declare, "I will become the complete whole, the universal Absolute." That is the defect of the Māyāvāda [impersonalistic] philosophers. Because we are all spirit (*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*) and the Supreme is also spirit (*para-brahman*), they declare, "I am qualitatively one with God, and therefore I am one with Him in every respect." A drop of ocean water contains the same ingredients as the big Pacific Ocean—it is qualitatively one with the ocean. But if a drop of ocean water says, "I desire to become the ocean," that is not possible. So, when we understand that we are qualitatively one and quantitatively minute in relation to the Supreme, that is our perfection.


Rethinking
DARWIN
A Vedic Study of Darwinism and Intelligent Design
Leif A. Jensen
with chapters contributed by
Jonathan Wells, William A. Dembski,
Michael J. Behe, and Michael A. Cremo

Darwinism & Intelligent Design

In *Rethinking Darwin,* Danish science writer Leif A. Jensen (Lalitānātha Dāsa), in collaboration with leading Intelligent Design proponents such as Dr. Michael Behe, Dr. William Dembski, and Dr. Jonathan Wells, points out flaws in the Darwinian paradigm and examines the case for intelligent design. The argument for design is next expanded with further evidence from archeology, cosmology, and studies of consciousness. Finally, based on the irreducible nature of consciousness, the book suggests an alternative paradigm drawn from the Vedic texts of ancient India.

Available online from store.krishna.com

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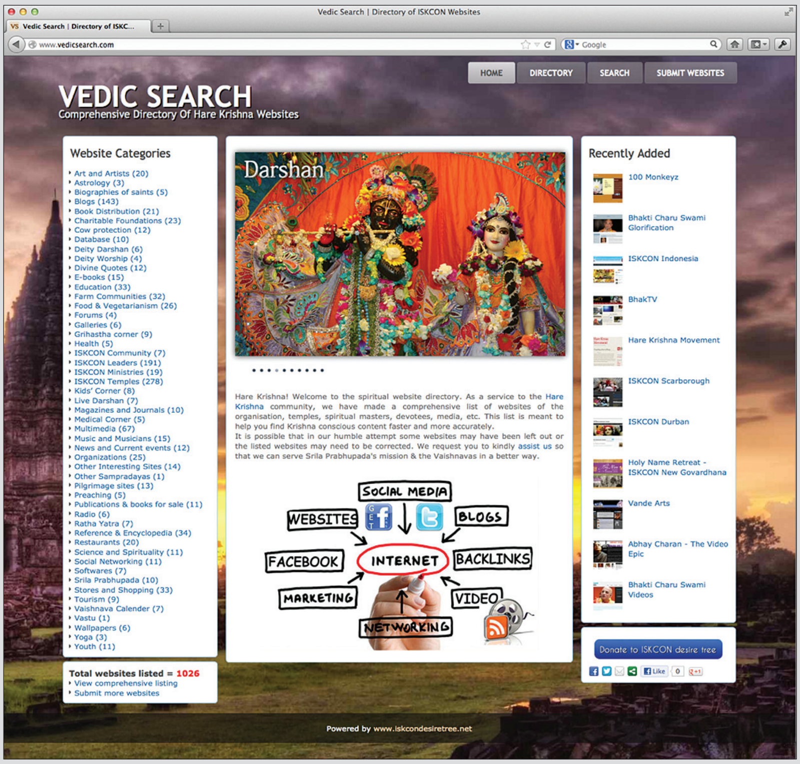
Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



VEDIC SEARCH

Comprehensive Directory Of Hare Krishna Websites

Website Categories

- Art and Artists (20)
- Astrology (3)
- Biographies of saints (5)
- Blogs (143)
- Book Distribution (21)
- Charitable Foundations (23)
- Cow protection (12)
- Database (10)
- Deity Darshan (6)
- Deity Worship (4)
- Divine Quotes (12)
- E-books (15)
- Education (33)
- Farm Communities (32)
- Food & Vegetarianism (26)
- Forums (4)
- Galleries (6)
- Grihastha corner (9)
- Health (5)
- ISKCON Community (7)
- ISKCON Leaders (191)
- ISKCON Ministries (19)
- ISKCON Temples (278)
- Kids' Corner (8)
- Live Darshan (7)
- Magazines and Journals (10)
- Medical Corner (5)
- Multimedia (67)
- Music and Musicians (15)
- News and Current events (12)
- Organizations (25)
- Other Interesting Sites (14)
- Other Sampradayas (1)
- Pilgrimage sites (13)
- Preaching (5)
- Publications & books for sale (11)
- Radio (6)
- Ratha Yatra (7)
- Reference & Encyclopedia (34)
- Restaurants (20)
- Science and Spirituality (11)
- Social Networking (11)
- Softwares (7)
- Srila Prabhupada (10)
- Stores and Shopping (33)
- Tourism (9)
- Vaishnava Calender (7)
- Vastu (1)
- Wallpapers (6)
- Yoga (3)
- Youth (11)

Total websites listed = 1026

- View comprehensive listing
- Submit more websites

Hare Krishna! Welcome to the spiritual website directory. As a service to the Hare Krishna community, we have made a comprehensive list of websites of the organisation, temples, spiritual masters, devotees, media, etc. This list is meant to help you find Krishna conscious content faster and more accurately.

It is possible that in our humble attempt some websites may have been left out or the listed websites may need to be corrected. We request you to kindly assist us so that we can serve Srila Prabhupada's mission & the Vaishnavas in a better way.

Recently Added

- 100 Monkeyz
- Bhakti Charu Swami Glorification
- ISKCON Indonesia
- BhakTV
- Hare Krishna Movement
- ISKCON Scarborough
- ISKCON Durban
- Holy Name Retreat - ISKCON New Govardhana
- Vande Arts
- Abhay Charan - The Video Epic
- Bhakti Charu Swami Videos

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vedicsearch.com is a website directory created by Padmavatī Devī Dāsī, who says she created the site to help the online devotee community find Kṛṣṇa conscious content more quickly.

This online directory contains links to more than one thousand Kṛṣṇa conscious websites from all over the world. It includes sites for organizations, temples, spiritual masters, devotees, news media, biographies, music, restaurants, and many more.

To make things easy to find, the websites are organized into groups. On the left of the home page you can see the alphabetic categories the sites are grouped under. When you click on the category you are interested in, you can see each of the sites in that group. There is a picture of each website and a link to take you to it. There is also a short description of the site to help you choose the ones you are interested in seeing.

If you click on the Directory button on the toolbar at the top of the site, you are taken to a page where all the collected sites are listed in alphabetical order. You can browse and choose from the many sites listed.

You can also search through the listed sites using a predictive search facility. Click on the Search button at the top, and in the search box start to type a site name or the kind of site you are looking for. After a few seconds a drop-down menu will appear under the search box, offering relevant websites you may find interesting. You can click on one you like or keep typing the words and click Enter to find an exact match.

On the Search page and the Home page you will see a list of recently added sites. You can click to visit any of them that look interesting.

If you have a Kṛṣṇa conscious website that's not listed, or if you know of one, you can click on Submit Website at the top of the site and send a link to be included for others to find.

—Antony Brennan

THE LAWS OF BHAKTI

(*continued from page 33*)

has appeared there. At other times they intuitively understand their relationship with the Lord, though such realization is still immature." (p. 303) "At *bhāva* [the next stage], when they transcend the boundaries of matter, the touch of the pleasure potency immediately awakens pure greed in their hearts." (p. 610) "Love of God (*prema*), the full manifestation of pure goodness, is like the sun. When a single but fully potent ray of the Kṛṣṇa-sun touches a devotee's heart, ecstatic devotion instantly becomes manifest. Just as a spark falling onto dry leaves quickly grows into a forest fire, one ray of pure goodness entering a devotee's heart quickly flares into a blaze of love for God." (p. 307)

Attaining the stage of pure love of God is the perfection of our existence, the goal of the human form of life. If we remain sincere, Kṛṣṇa's mercy is assured. Like any other science, if we stick to the principles and carefully avoid the dangers, we are bound to attain success in this life. ❁

Mukundamālā Dāsa is a member of the BTG India editorial team. This article is based on a class given by Rādhā Gopīnātha Dāsa at ISKCON Mumbai.

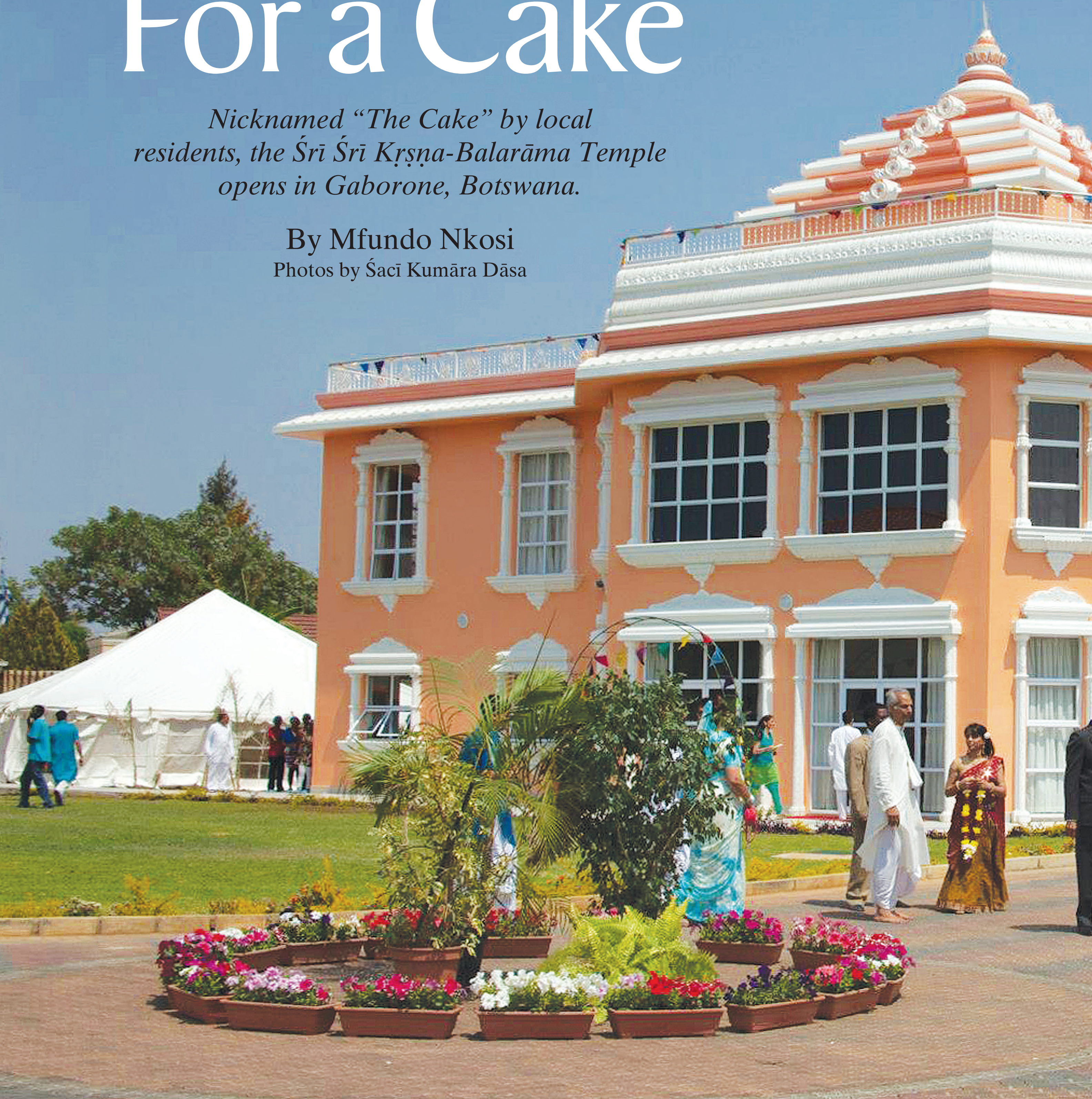
Perfect Ingredients For a Cake

Nicknamed "The Cake" by local residents, the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple opens in Gaborone, Botswana.

By Mfundo Nkosi

Photos by Śacī Kumāra Dāsa

AS WE VENTURE over the northwestern border of South Africa by car into Botswana, we sense an almost instant change in landscape. The mercury seems to have crept up a notch or two as we drive along a narrow road away from the border post, headed towards the country's capital, Gaborone. The dry Kalahari terrain is meagerly populated with plant life. The beige sand extends



as far as the horizon and is decorated with greenish-brown hues of what little vegetation there is. The semi-arid, sandy savannah is under the full brunt of the sun that shines through a cloudless sky on this day.

As we near the outskirts of the city, this sparsely populated tract of land slowly transforms into a residential area. We are quick to notice how the residents have embraced the modern way of life. Despite the well-built roads and impressive infrastructure, among all the urbanization you still find small informal houses.

Botswana is on the rise economically. It boasts an impressive

Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, the presiding deities of ISKCON Gaborone, moved into Their new temple during Rādhāṣṭamī weekend last September.

array of natural resources, the most famous of which are its diamonds. Botswana also ranks as one of the most stable democracies in Africa, with a currency, the pula, to match this stability, which has attracted international interest in the form of foreign investment.

Situated in the heart of the Kalahari Desert, the land is particularly difficult to inhabit. Thus there is no surprise that Botswana is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world, with a population of just over two million. Nonetheless it has made significant strides in education and economic development.

Contemplating the material prospects of Botswana, you detect that the future bodes well for this land. However, in conjunction with these thoughts I begin to envisage what the spiritual prospects of this nation may be. What wealth can we find beyond the monetary value that attracts foreign traders? What beauty can we marvel at other than the natural landscape? What treasure could be uncovered of greater value than diamonds and coal? Upon ending my enquiry I open my eyes and look ahead. There stands the answer to my questions: ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple.

An Oasis

Atop a mighty dome the Lord's Sudarśana *cakra* graces the sky. The white and saffron tones of the temple structure make the scene all the more dramatic, breaking the monotony of the surroundings. The temple is a buzz of activity. Cars line the roadside, some squeezed into tiny corners. People flow in and out of the main temple entrance. Balloons, festoons, banners, and festival planners are everywhere. We have entered an oasis where the scorching heat is dispelled by the shower of devotees' love, the cooling breeze carrying the scent

Resplendent on Their new altar (left), Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma grant an audience to Their devotees. Below, the Tswana-language edition of On the Way to Kṛṣṇa *is offered to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi. At bottom: a beautiful setting for the sacred* tulasī *plant.*

of *prasāda,* and a delightful *kīrtana* permeating the ether in all directions.

The intricate detail of the temple can only be appreciated up close. Meticulously carved into and painted on the building are images of peacocks, *tilaka,* cows, elephants, and many elaborate patterns. A staircase, towered over by three magnificent barrel arches, leads up to the temple room, the epicenter of this spiritual environment. The high ceiling of the temple room immediately invokes an aura of

MO TSELENG GO YA KWA GO KṚṢṆA
MO TSELENG GO YA KWA GO KṚṢṆA
MO TSELENG GO YA KWA GO KṚṢṆA

*During the installation ceremonies, devotees carry Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma into the new temple (above) and position Them (right) for Their ceremonial bath (*abhiṣeka*).*

majesty. The main altar stands to the right as you enter, with a grand stage directly opposite the altar at the other end of the hall. Flanking the left side of the main altar is Śrīla Prabhupāda, sitting peacefully on his *vyāsāsana.* Rising from the marble tiled floor after offering obeisances, I notice the dioramas depicting the ten principal incarnations of the Lord lining the walls.

The temple architecture—the workmanship, painting, and thought behind every detail—easily captures anyone's imagination. The beauty of the structure, however, isn't confined to the daytime. The temple is also the first fully LED-lit building in Botswana. Not only does this save on energy, but it makes for a spectacular night visual.

The story behind every brick laid, every nail hammered, and every color brush-stroked is an account of how much dedication and commitment was given by all persons involved with the construction. Eager to learn more, I read a summary of the construction history that reveals the sheer scale of this project. More than half a million bricks were used (570,000), as well as 6,250 bags of cement, 37 tons of steel, 10,000 square meters of tiling, 4,500 liters of paint, and countless man hours spent building and planning. These awe-inspiring figures create a curiosity in me to meet the team involved with the construction and find out their stories.

The People Behind The Project

Sitting in the temple gardens, I get a chance to speak with Sevā Mañjarī Devī Dāsī and her daughter, Srini. Sevā Mañjarī is eager to tell me of her involvement.

"When we started painting the dioramas, I was still working full-time and my daughter was a full-time student in university. She was doing a double major in administration and environmental science. I was working half a day, and I realized how much time and raw material were being wasted. Many of the dioramas were carved in my absence, but we weren't entirely happy with the work, and they had to be broken again and again. So I decided to leave my job and dedicate all my time on the dioramas. I left my job as a floor manager and joined Devakīnandana Prabhu [the construction project manager].

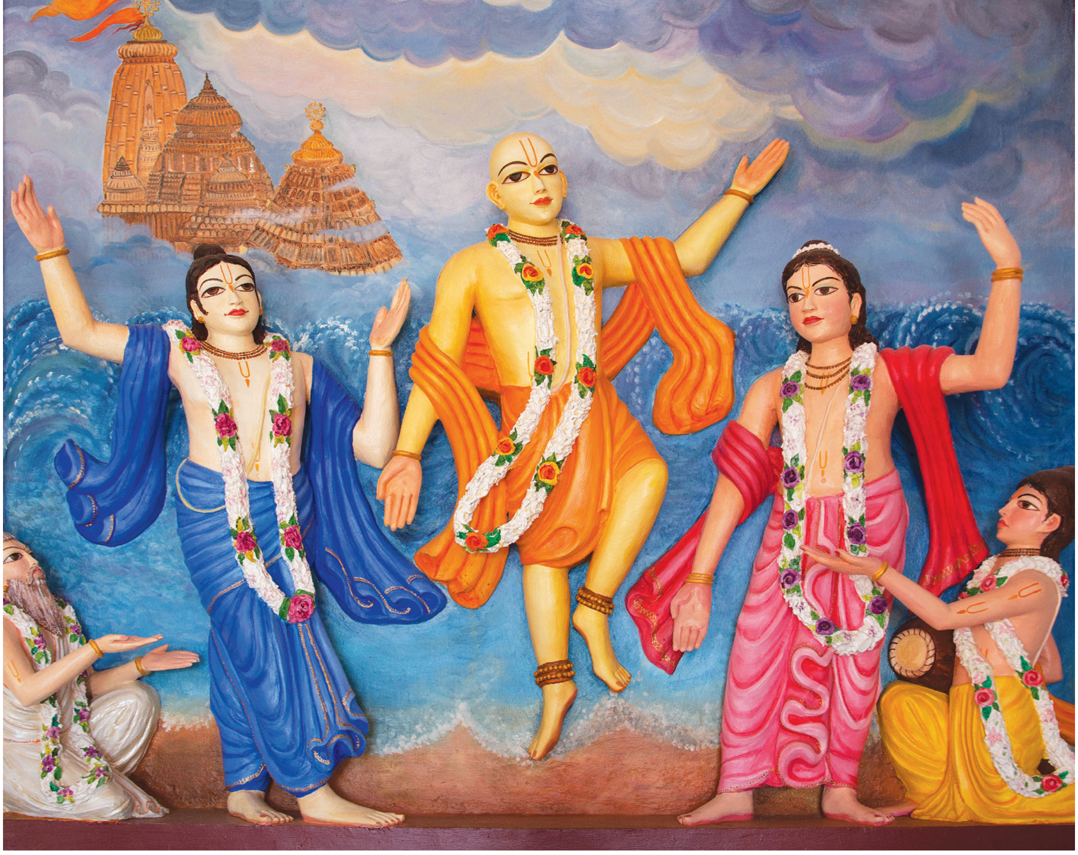
"To leave my job was a big thing because so many things were dependent on it. My husband at the time was paralyzed, and we lived with my mother. My mother is eighty-three, so she was dependent on me too. So I had a lot of responsibility on my shoulders. To leave a job was a very big decision in my life because that means there was no income. So Devakīnandana Prabhu said, 'You left your job for my sake and for Kṛṣṇa's temple, so we will give you something to run your family.' So he made arrangements so I could get support for my family."

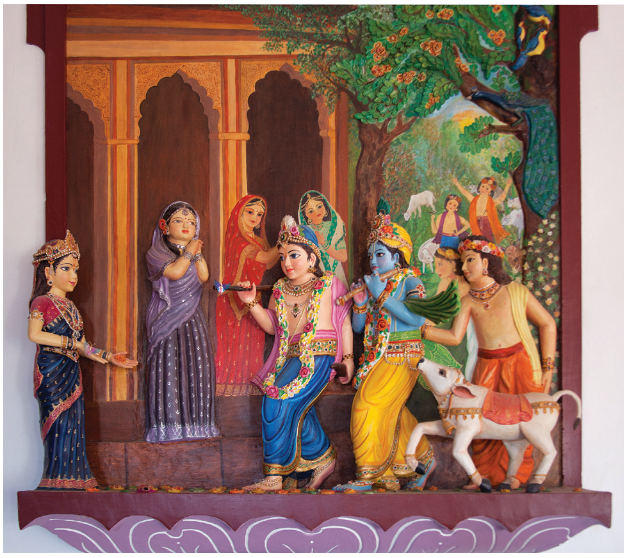
While the temple management helped support her family, her husband and her daughter, Srini, supported her efforts in helping build the temple. For example, when she would sometimes work late into the night, her family offered support by staying up late to chant the holy names. Her husband passed away in February of 2012, while the construction was going on. After only three days, she returned to her work on the project.

Next I speak with Ātmatattva Dāsa. He straightaway narrates his experience with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

"Only a year ago you could take *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and you would be only a meter or two away from Them. It was very personal and very intimate being so close to Them back then. Today we're celebrating the grand opening of Their temple. So it's been a journey. Everyone who passes by this temple slows down and looks in wonder. The temple does all the preaching. It's a beautiful building. It looks like a cake.

"The success of the temple will be based on how it will touch people. The main challenge going for-



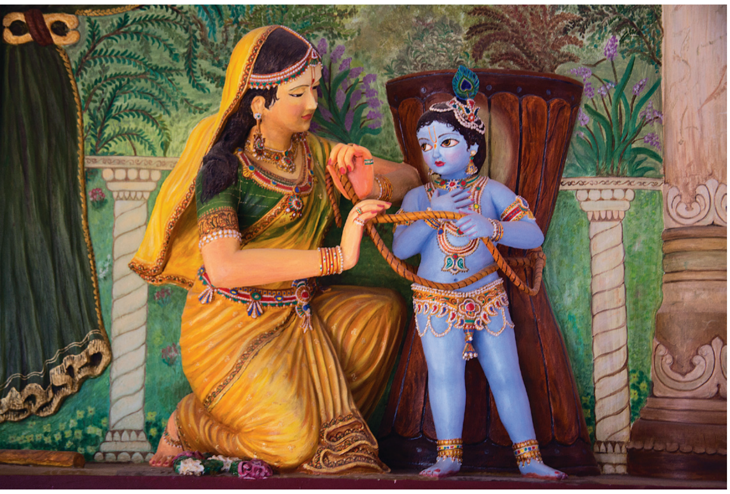


ward is going beyond the bodily concept. A large number of the population still think it's a Hindu thing. Books are the solution. We need to invite people to programs and show this isn't exclusive to a particular race or religion. This is the biggest challenge, but if conquered it will be the biggest triumph."

What is the vision of the temple going forward, especially with regard to the African community? I ask Gaurī Dāsa, who works on the development master plan for Bhaktivedanta Manor in London and is a close friend of Devakīnandana Dāsa.

"From my experience, taking care of people is the key. We need to be patient, careful, inclusive, and accommodating to all. We need to galvanize the community and make them part of our long-term plan. Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to be integrated into the African context. What is it that will appeal to the African population without losing the essence of what we're teaching?"

"I heard they call the temple 'The Cake,'" he said, laughing. "I did not see it as a cake, but after hearing it from the local people, I understand why they would say so.



Vraja Vallabha Dāsa (top, left) speaks to schoolchildren on a tour of the temple. Top, above, and left: a sampling of the bas-reliefs that grace the walls of the temple.

Botswana Vice President Dr. Kedikilwe garlands Śrīla Prabhupāda (above). Below, the audience responds to the speaker during the Rāḍhāṣṭamī lecture. Opposite page: Dr. Kedikilwe and temple president Reṇukā Devī Dāsī.

They have nothing else to relate the architecture of the temple to. The people and community have embraced the temple and have given it a name. Now we need to take the teachings and the spirit of devotion to them."

Echoing the words of Gaurī Dāsa, His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda made elaborate arrangements, such as this temple, to attract people. The grandeur of God allures people. That is why having a temple like this is important—because it attracts people. Once people are attracted they get the opportunity to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Books are what will make the temple grow.

"African preaching is growing, and it shows that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is for everyone. My appeal to the all citizens of Botswana is 'Please come forward and get to know the Lord. Spread His message all around for your benefit and the benefit of all.'"

It is very difficult to move around the ISKCON Botswana temple complex and not hear the name of Devakīnandana Dāsa. After moving from England in 1990, where he was closely affiliated with Bhaktivedanta Manor, he settled in Botswana. Two years later a regular Nāma Haṭṭa congregational program was established, hosted at various homes and at the local Hindu hall.

"In 1994 we began our own house programs in our home in Gaborone," Devakīnandana says. "The home was extended to have a temple and a deity kitchen for Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, the deities we worshiped at home. I had long wanted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma deities, though. I am very attracted to the deities of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in Vrindavan. I got initiated in 1994, and after some time, in 1996, when we wanted to register ISKCON Botswana and print some calendars, we weren't sure what to call the temple because not a lot of people had heard of Gaura-Nitāi. So, without much consideration, we called the temple Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple."

Along with his brother, Jamadagni Ṛṣi Dāsa, who cofounded the temple, Devakīnandana also took on the role of project manager for the construction.

"It's important to treat people with warmth and to give *prasāda* and share *kīrtana,*" he explains. "Many schoolchildren have come to the temple on visits. We offer to pay for their transport and *prasāda.* We have also established a really good relationship with Professor Motsupeng, in the theology department at the University of Botswana. The country's Vice President, Dr. Ponatshego H. K. Kedikilwe, has honored us by visiting a few times, officially opening the temple and receiving our books and pamphlets. The media coverage generated has been very favorable. Recently His Holiness Jayādvaita Swami had an interview on a local radio station, and His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami was hosted for an interview at the University of Botswana with the country's former President. This temple is a dream come true for me. I could never think small. I always think big. Now this dream has become divine reality."

The temple opens up so much for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's

One of the many joyful kīrtanas *of the festival weekend (above). At right, visiting ISKCON* sannyāsīs *take part in the installation fire-sacrifice.*

saṅkīrtana movement in this nation. The temple president, Reṇukā Devī Dāsī, unwrapped the vision for the temple in an article written in the temple-opening souvenir magazine:

"I envision this Centre becoming a hub for Botswana in playing a vital role in fulfilling Lord Caitanya's mission of spreading the holy names of the Lord in every town and village. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has been the main source of inspiration for this project. We would not be in this position without his grace and mercy, and this temple is a mere drop in comparison to what he achieved in his lifetime, starting at a late stage of life, all alone. However, what he accomplished has transformed the whole world. My vision for this temple is that it becomes a platform to further Srila Prabhupada's mission. This can be done by making Food for Life easier to organize, and by taking preaching to another level."

Vice President Dr. Kedikilwe said in his official letter to the temple, "The opening of this complex will provide a unique opportunity for Botswana's diverse cultures and religions to convene and open their doors and hearts to each other, which will serve as an embodiment of a proud and united nation."

The Blessings of Rādhā

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were installed in Their new temple on the auspicious day of Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Her mercy was perceivable as the temple filled with hundreds of people from different corners of Africa and the world chanting along to a *kīrtana* led by His Holiness Lokanāth Swami.

His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami said in his lecture on opening day, "Nobody has dispensed Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mercy more than Śrīla Prabhupāda, and this temple is a result of that inconceivable mercy."

The sun eventually went to rest, bringing a close to what was an awe-inspiring Rādhāṣṭamī weekend. On the road headed back home, I couldn't help but relish the delightful association I had with the devotees of the ISKCON Botswana temple. This stunning and majestic temple is crammed full of the sweetness of each devotee's story, their trials and sincere efforts to please Śrīla Prabhupāda. The devotees of Botswana and their dedication to Śrīla Prabhupāda are the perfect ingredients for spreading the Lord's mercy. And for me, this is why they call the temple "The Cake." ❁

Mfundo Nkosi, from Johannesburg, South Africa, learned about Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. A third-year civil engineering student, he has been a member of the Bhakti Yoga Society since 2009. He helps in preparing study guides of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for students, scheduling academic lectures on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and publishing the fortnightly Bhakti Yoga Society newsletter, called A Cup of Bhakti. *He also serves in the pamphlet division of BBT Africa.*

VIṢṆU OR KṚṢṆA?

(*continued from page 19*)

Supreme. The four qualities unique to Kṛṣṇa are as follows:

1. *Līlā-mādhurya:* He exhibits numerous wonderful pastimes for the pleasure of His devotees.
2. *Bhakta-mādhurya:* He interacts with loving devotees in intimate ways.
3. *Veṇu-mādhurya:* He plays on His divine flute, thus attracting all souls.
4. *Rūpa-mādhurya:* His beautiful form is incomparable, unrivaled in all of existence.

Embedded in these scriptural explanations of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position is something more fundamental: Kṛṣṇa's supremacy underscores the superiority of love over power, sweetness over opulence.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in the *Navadvīpa Bhāva Taraṅga* (118): "As much as my Śrī Kṛṣṇa is endowed with utmost sweetness [*mādhurya*], similarly the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha is endowed with absolute opulence and grandeur [*aiśvarya*]. Lord Kṛṣṇa as Vrajendra-nandana [the darling of the king of Vraja] never gives up this same opulence, but such aspects of His spiritual grandeur are considered unimportant by His pure devotees."

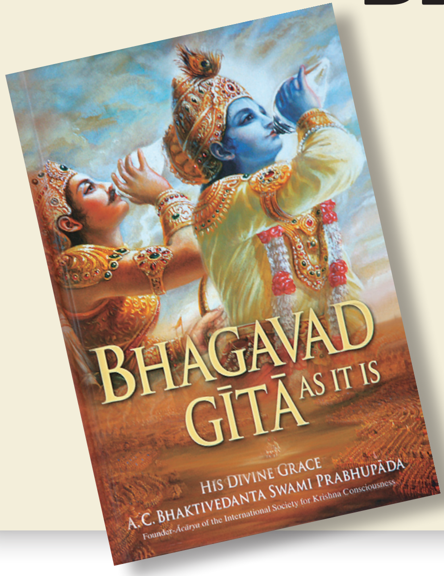
In other words, while Kṛṣṇa sometimes reveals an opulent side that parallels that of Viṣṇu, as, for instance, when He enacts His kingly pastimes in Dwarka, Viṣṇu never displays the sweetness associated with Kṛṣṇa and His associates. Therefore, it can be said that Kṛṣṇa has something not found in Viṣṇu—pastimes of intimate, familiar love.

Most concepts of God, even in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, naturally evoke awe and reverence, but Kṛṣṇa evokes intimacy and personal loving relationship. It is this, beyond all else, that distinguishes Him among manifestations of the Supreme. And love, as we all know, is the highest phenomenon in all of existence. After all, when confronted with a choice between power and love, who would choose the former?

In conclusion, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava vision of the divine is that all forms of Godhead are equal—since there is only one God—but Kṛṣṇa enjoys a special position as the "candle who lights the other candles." In addition to His ontologically prior position as the source of all Viṣṇu manifestations of the Supreme, He exudes a sweetness and intimacy that eclipses the power and majesty of other divine forms. In fact, His all-attractive nature (Kṛṣṇa means "the all-attractive one") even attracts other manifestations of the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that Kṛṣṇa is known as Madana-mohana because He conquers the mind of Cupid (Madana). When He stands in a three-curved way, He attracts all living entities, including the demigods. Indeed, He even attracts the Nārāyaṇa form presiding in every Vaikuṇṭha planet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in Chapter Ten of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya:* "There is no beauty to compare with that of Kṛṣṇa, who is the origin of Nārāyaṇa and all other incarnations, for no one possesses beauty equal to or greater than Kṛṣṇa's. Otherwise, why would the goddess of fortune, the constant companion of Nārāyaṇa, give up His association and engage herself in penance to gain the association of Kṛṣṇa? Such is the superexcellent beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the everlasting mine of all beauty. It is from that beauty that all other beautiful things emanate."

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor and founding editor of the Journal of Vaishnava Studies. *He has written more than thirty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.*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FROM THE EDITOR

Let's Be Good

ONE WAY TO CATEGORIZE philosophies, especially theistic ones, is by listing their view of humanity: Is it positive or negative? Or, put another way, does the philosophy in question regard human beings as fundamentally good or fundamentally bad?

As often happens when trying to apply a question like this to the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, giving a conclusive answer is difficult. We have to start by clarifying the question.

First of all, we'd have to define "good" and "bad." But let's put that aside and say that most people have a basic agreement about what the words mean.

Consider another problem: The question assumes that "human beings" are a basic category, but we know from the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the human body is a covering of the actual person, the immortal soul. So the question about our view of humanity doesn't go deep enough. It should ask whether the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness considers the actual self—the soul—to be fundamentally good or bad.

The answer to that is easy: Because the soul is an eternal part of God, the supreme good, the soul too is good by nature. We souls exist to partake in God's infinite goodness and love. In our pure state, we fully cooperate with God. And, to touch on the question of what *good* means, the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness defines *good* (in the highest sense) as full cooperation with God, or Kṛṣṇa.

When we consider human beings, the picture gets fuzzier. We might describe human beings as souls not in their right mind. We have human bodies because we've rebelled against Kṛṣṇa. Rebellion against God is bad, so we can justifiably say that the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has a negative view of humanity. As Prabhupāda and our scriptures teach us, the material world is a kind of prison. We wouldn't be here if we were good.

As with most things, though, there are degrees of good and bad. Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings on the three modes of material nature suggest that at least some human beings can be considered good, although we might disagree with the popular notion that most people are basically good. In terms of the *Gītā's* teachings, persons heavily influenced by the lower modes, namely passion and ignorance, are not considered good. And according to our scriptures, the modes of passion and ignorance predominate in our times.

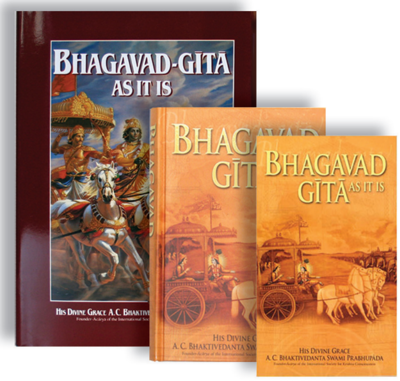
This raises another nuance to the original question: In what era are we to consider whether human beings are basically good or bad? Our scriptures tell of previous ages when goodness was the status quo. Our judgment of the people of those times would be quite positive. We'd be happy to say, "Yes, people are basically good."

Those times are gone, but even today human beings don't have to follow the dictates of the lower modes. As the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells us, the practices of *bhakti-yoga,* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, can elevate us to goodness, no matter where we begin. In fact, the *Bhāgavatam* aims "to bring about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization" (*Bhāg.* 1.5.11).

Śrīla Prabhupāda left India in his old age because of his conviction that the message of the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam* can change the character of the world. The more the purifying power of Kṛṣṇa consciousness spreads throughout humanity, the more we'll be justified in saying, "Yes, people are basically good."

—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda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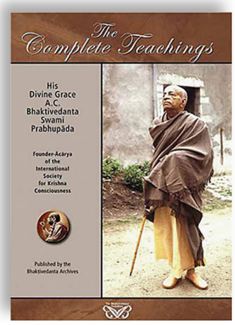
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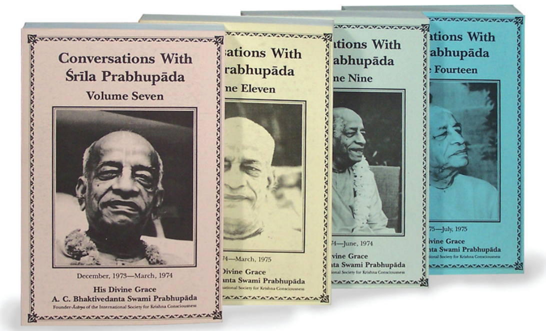
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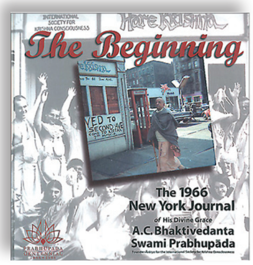
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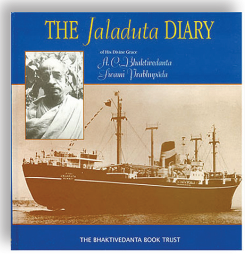
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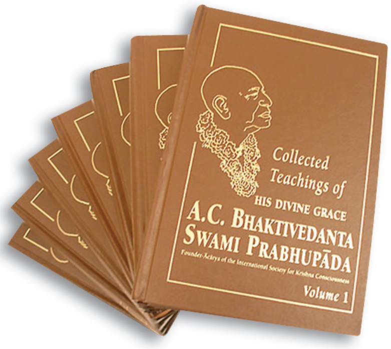
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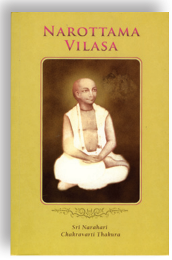
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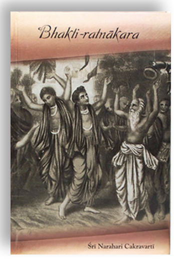
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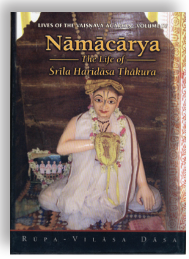
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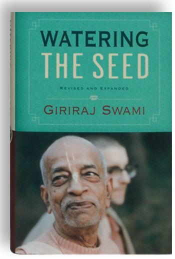
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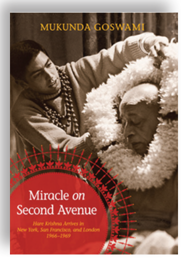
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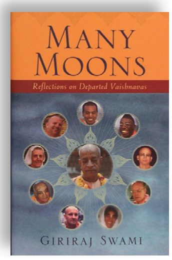
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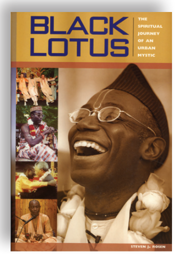
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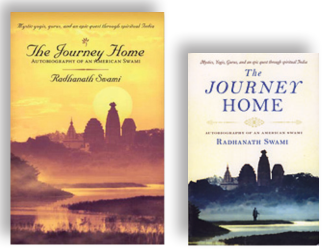
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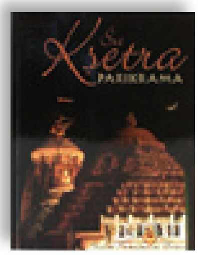
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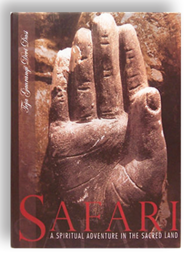
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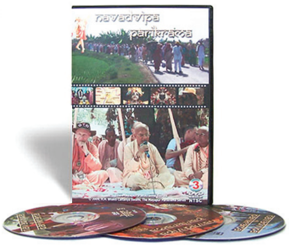
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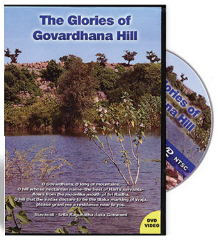
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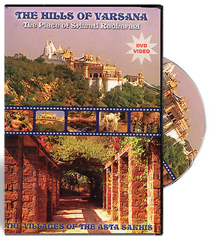
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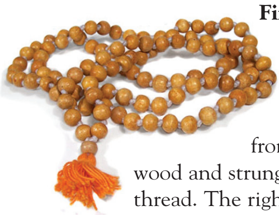

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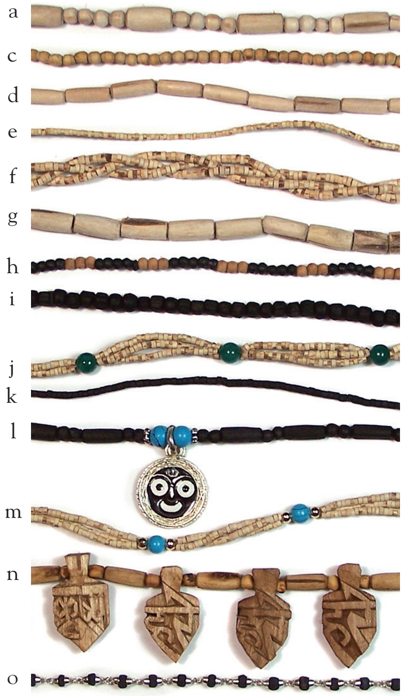
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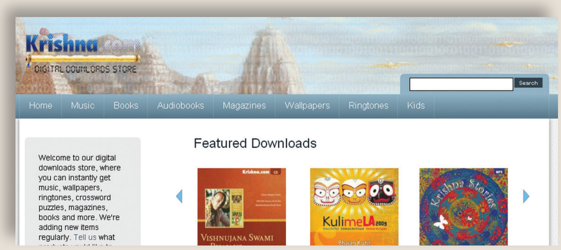
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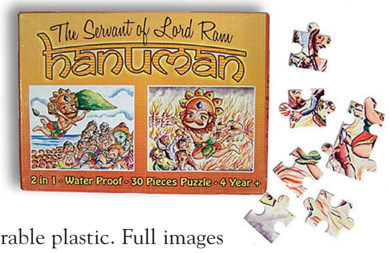

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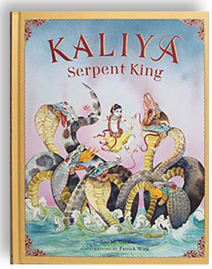

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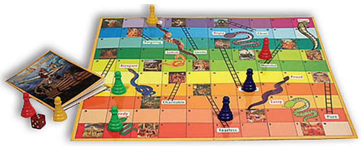

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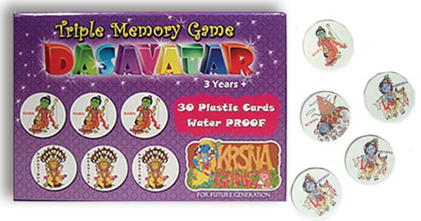

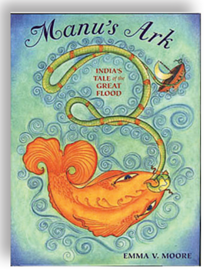

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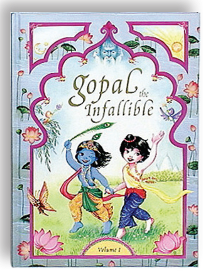

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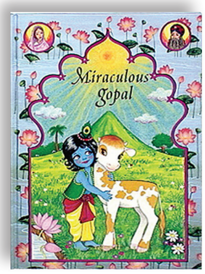

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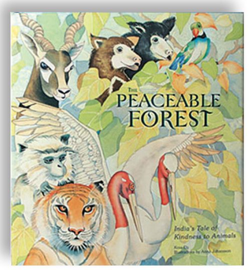

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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
The Path of Perfection, Chapter 4

The Absolute cannot be known by any methods of aspiring endeavor that are familiar to philosophers and scientists who meddle with physical nature. The only method is to wait for the agent of the Absolute to take the initiative, and to pray to be able to recognize him when he actually does appear on this mundane plane.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Gandhiji's Ten Questions
(*Harmonist,* January 7, 1933)

It is personally experienced by me that those who are always full of cares and anxieties due to desiring contact of the senses with their objects can cross the ocean of nescience on a most suitable boat—the constant chanting of the transcendental activities of the Personality of Godhead.

Śrī Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.34

The Supreme Truth exists outside and inside of all living beings, the moving and the nonmoving. Because He is subtle, He is beyond the power of the material senses to see or to know. Although far, far away, He is also near to all.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 13.16

I offer my respectful obeisances to that Supreme Person [Caitanya Mahāprabhu] who has given the living entities tormented by Kali the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. That holy name is auspicious to the world, and it destroys all obstacles along with the miseries of lamentation, illusion, and greed.

Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya
Śrī Caitanya-śataka 23

O my Lord! I have no attachment for religiosity, or for accumulating wealth, or for enjoying sense gratification. Let these come as they inevitably must, in accordance with my past deeds. But I do pray for this most cherished boon: birth after birth, let me render unflinching devotional service unto Your two lotus feet.

Mahārāja Kulaśekhara
Mukunda-mālā-stotra 5

The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.54

2013
Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival of India
Schedule for North America

2012 New York Rathayātrā

May 1: American University (Washington, D.C.) Festival
May 2–3: University of Maryland, College Park, Festival
May 6: George Washington University, Washington, D.C., Festival
May 7: George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, Festival
May 9: University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Festival
May 10: Virginia Commonwealth University Festival
May 18–19: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā
May 25–26: Memorial Day Weekend, Baltimore Rathayātrā
June 1–2: Atlanta Pāṇihāṭi Festival & Rathayātrā
June 8: New York City Rathayātrā
June 15–16: Boston Rathayātrā
June 23: Chicago Rathayātrā
June 29–30: Bloomington, Illinois, Rathayātrā
July 6–7: Montreal Rathayātrā
July 13–14: Toronto Rathayātrā
July 16: Thunder Bay, Ontario, Festival
July 20: Calgary Rathayātrā
July 27: Edmonton Rathayātrā
August 4: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
August 10–11: Vancouver Rathayātrā
August 17–18: San Francisco Rathayātrā
August 28–29: Vancouver, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa Pūjā
August 31–September 2: Labor Day Weekend, Seattle/Bellevue, Washington, Rathayātrā
September 4–6: University of Colorado, Boulder, Festival
September 9–11: University Program in Denver
September 14: Jacksonville Beach Rathayātrā
September 28: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
Early October: University Programs in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., Areas
October 12: Potomac, Maryland, Śrī Rāma Vijaya Festival

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some of these dates are yet to be confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival date with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival of India: madhuhadasa@gmail.com.

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